

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialist gets hearing in
Los Angeles mayoral race

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Mass protests in Ecuador push back austerity moves

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND HILDA CUZCO

Thousands of indigenous workers and peasants marched in the Ecuadorian capital Quito February 7 to celebrate their victory in forcing the government of Gustavo Noboa to back down on implementing the latest round of austerity measures carried out at the behest of the International Monetary Fund.

Indigenous peoples had organized a national mobilization with marches and road blockades since January 28, calling for cancellation of the price increases on basic necessities. They persisted even when the government declared a state of emergency in an attempt to quell the protests. Since the beginning of the action, the indigenous people faced military and police repression that twice stalled talks with the government and left four dead, dozens wounded, and hundreds in jail.

On February 7, President Noboa met at the government palace with Antonio Vargas, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the largest indigenous movement in the country; Pedro de la Cruz, president of the National Federation of Peasant, Indian, and Black Organizations (FENOCIN); and other leaders to sign a 23-point agreement to ease the austerity package.

The government measures instituted in December increased the price of a cylinder



Workers and peasants from town of Pilahuin, Ecuador, who organized daily road-blocks, return to their homes after forcing government to retreat from austerity moves.

of cooking gas by 100 percent, to \$2.00. Noboa agreed to roll the price back to \$1.60. Gasoline prices, increased by up to 25 percent, will now be frozen during 2001. Bus fares, which skyrocketed by 75 percent, will

be reviewed. Meanwhile, the government pledged to implement a half price transport fare for children, students, the elderly, and disabled. In addition, Noboa agreed

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Coal miners defend black lung benefits

BY TONY LANE
AND SALM KOLIS

UNIONTOWN, Pennsylvania—Mine workers union president Cecil Roberts told a meeting of 200 people here that they "may have to march again" in response to moves by the coal bosses and the Bush administration to scuttle new regulations covering black lung benefits. His comments got a rousing response. One retiree leapt to his feet shouting, "We will march!"

The February 9 meeting, organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), was attended mostly by retired coal miners. It was the second such meeting organized by the UMWA; an earlier meeting had been held in Charleston, West Virginia. That same day a federal judge had ruled earlier in the day that new regulations—rule changes fiercely opposed by the coal bosses because they registered a few gains for miners—would be put on hold and that no new claims for black lung benefits could be filed. More than 400 miners or widows file claims every month.

Black lung, or coal miners' pneumoconiosis, is caused by breathing coal dust. There is no cure, but with the proper control methods it can be prevented. It is estimated that 1,500 miners die every year from the disease. Currently, 80,000 miners or widows receive black lung benefits.

After a concerted effort over several years by the union, the Black Lung Association, and black lung clinics, new regulations were put into effect January 19. Roberts called them a "modest step forward in easing the claims process" for black lung victims. Currently, seven out of 100 claimants receive benefits. It is estimated that the new regulations would increase those winning benefits to 12 out of every 100 workers filing for compensation.

Within days of the new regulations being announced, the coal bosses, through the

National Mining Association (NMA), launched a legal challenge seeking to prevent them from being put into effect and to overturn them. When the suit was filed in court, the Justice Department joined forces with the bosses in this assault.

Judge Emmet Sullivan declined to overturn the regulations but ordered the attorneys for the Bush administration and the NMA to come up with a new proposal. In a blow to thousands of mine workers, the ruling stipulates that all claims filed after the

new rules took effect will not be processed until the NMA lawsuit is resolved. The ruling further puts on hold any claims already filed that involve any of the 47 provisions being challenged by the mine owners' association.

Responding to this ruling, a UMWA spokesman said that he was "disappointed" and "distressed that so many cases are on hold." He said the union is considering organizing a demonstration when George

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East Coast meeting March 11, New York City, to celebrate

The 40th anniversary of U.S. imperialism's first defeat in the Americas, the victory of the Cuban people at the Bay of Pigs, in defense of their socialist revolution

A public launching of Pathfinder's campaign to sell *Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas and Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*; as well as *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*

The program will feature:

MARY-ALICE WATERS, Pathfinder president and editor of *Making History* and of *Fertile Ground*, launched at the February 2001 Havana book fair

JACK BARNES, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, author of introduction to *Bay of Pigs*

STEVE CLARK, an editor, *Bay of Pigs*

MARTIN KOPPEL, editor, *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, organizer of Books for Cuba Fund, and chair of Havana book fair meeting to donate 300 copies of *Haciendo Historia*, the Spanish edition of *Making History*, to the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution

OLYMPIA NEWTON, member, Young Socialists National Leadership Council and *Militant* reporter at Havana book fair

NATALIE STAKE-DOUCET, YS leader from Canada

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Havana meeting launches 'Fertile Ground'

BY MARTIN KOPPEL
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA—A highlight of the 10th Havana International Book Fair, held here February 2-10, was a meeting to launch the new

Book by Rodolfo Saldaña shows 'future of our Americas'—Talk by Mary-Alice Waters and report on meeting in Havana

—pages 8-9

Pathfinder book *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*. The meeting also announced the imminent publication of the Spanish-language edition, which the Cuban publishing house Editora Política is bringing out.

The new book is an interview with Bolivian communist Rodolfo Saldaña, who joined with Ernesto Che Guevara—one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution—in the revolutionary front that Guevara commanded in Bolivia in 1966-67.

Fertile Ground, which came off the presses in New York just in time for the

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'We're going flat broke,' say farmers at convention

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico—The crisis facing working farmers was the centerpiece of the National Farmers Organization national convention, held here January 17-20. The meeting drew 250 farmers and staff members of the group.

"The American farmer is flat broke," NFO president Paul Olson told the gathering. "We don't have one generation [of farmers] left. Corporate America is putting us on the other side of the fence. They won't help us. I have lost all confidence in Washington. The last farm bill was written by the Farm Bureau and Cargill," he stated. The Farm Bureau on the whole represents the interests of large capitalist farmers and Cargill is one of the handful of grain monopolies.

In his talk, Olson reviewed the squeeze farmers face as the prices they receive for the commodities they produce are going down as cost of inputs necessary for production are increasing. A few speakers compared the crisis facing producers on the land to that facing working people. Some discussion was also raised at the convention about the reasons for these deteriorating economic conditions.

The NFO evolved from a farm protest

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Embassy bombing trial attacks democratic rights — page 2

Embassy bombing trial undermines democratic rights

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington is using the federal trial of four men accused of the 1998 car bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to undermine democratic rights in the United States and to justify use of U.S. military might against those it tars as "terrorists" abroad.

In the trial that opened February 5 in Federal District Court in Manhattan, two men are charged with directly assisting the bombings, and the other two defendants are accused of involvement in a "global plot" that "aims to kill Americans anywhere in the world," according to an article in the *New York Times*. The bombings killed 224 people, including 12 U.S. citizens.

"The need for extra vigilance [in the trial] should not be underestimated," warned the editors of the *Times*, "given the brutal nature of the crimes and the breadth of the conspiracy outlined by the government." Armed federal marshals have occupied streets around the New York courthouse. Reinforcing metal posts surround the front, supposedly as a shield against potential "suicide drivers."

The trial is based on a more than 100-page indictment and is expected to last more than nine months.

The prosecution's first witness, Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, a U.S.-government informant since 1996, said he belonged to a "militant Islamic organization" supposedly headed by Saudi businessman Osama bin Laden. Al-Fadl testified that he took an oath of allegiance when he joined the group sometime around 1990 but later broke with bin Laden in 1996 after he was caught stealing \$110,000 from him. Al-Fadl approached officials at a U.S. embassy later that year, trading his "evidence" for protection in the U.S. federal witness protection program. Al-Fadl's testimony said nothing about the blasts at the U.S. embassies nor the actions of the defendants.

Five days after the explosions at the U.S. embassies, FBI agents accompanied by

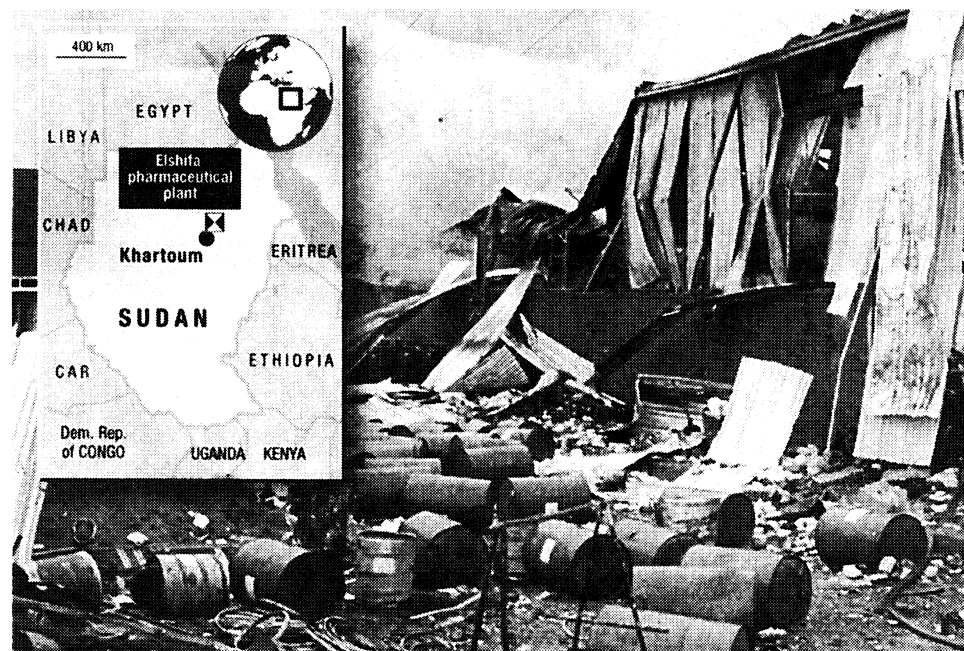
Kenyan cops snatched Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-Owhali out of a hotel in a village outside Nairobi. Owhali was taken to the Kenyan Criminal Investigation Department where, after being interrogated for two weeks by the FBI agents and Kenyan authorities, he confessed to the bombing.

No Miranda rights for those abroad

But before the trial opened, defense lawyers for three of the four defendants asked the judge to throw out confessions extracted from their clients. Owhali said that during the interrogation one cop threatened to harm his family and he was told by U.S. agents that if he demanded a lawyer he would be left in the hands of the Kenyans where "you will be hanged from your neck like a dog." Owhali said he feared Kenyan officials would torture or kill him.

Attorneys for Owhali and another defendant, Mohamed Saddiq Odeh, said their clients were threatened by U.S. officials during interrogation and said the agents never informed the men of their right to a lawyer. Owhali said when he asked for a lawyer before being put into a police lineup he was told by a FBI agent that "because I had no money, I could not have a lawyer."

One of the agents reportedly told him in Kenya, "Because we are not in the United States, we cannot ensure that you will have



Pharmaceutical plant in Sudan demolished by U.S. cruise missiles in August 1998. With no evidence, Washington claimed facility was part of a "terrorist network."

a lawyer appointed for you before any questioning." All of the accused were questioned overseas before being brought to the United States for trial.

U.S. government officials maintain that while they led the interrogation of Owhali in Nairobi, he was under the custody of Kenyan officials when they forced him to confess, and that he had no right to an attorney under Kenyan law. Owhali's lawyers said the lead prosecutor in the case, Patrick Fitzgerald, was a participant in the questioning of Owhali in Kenya and he was therefore in U.S. custody. Thus he should have been entitled to the same constitutional protections that he would have had in the United States.

Judge Leonard Sand of the Federal District Court in Manhattan initially ruled to

suppress Owhali's coerced statements as evidence, but reversed his decision after prosecutors pressed him to allow them to be used in the trial. Sand decided that although the defendant's testimony was believable, while "classic Miranda doctrine" is supposed to ensure that a defendant is advised of the right to counsel before being questioned and given a lawyer if they cannot afford one, that may not always be feasible when U.S. government officials interrogate someone in another country.

While all the defendants pled not guilty of the charges, the lawyer for Khalfan Khamis Mohamed said his client was involved in making the bomb that exploded at the U.S. embassy in Tanzania but did not know what it was to be used for. The four

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Canadian gov't widens Air India frame-up

BY STEVE PENNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—The prosecutors of two Sikh men charged with the bombing of an Air India plane in 1985, Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri, are now seeking permission from the British government to prosecute a third man, Inderjit Singh Reyat.

Reyat, a former Vancouver Island auto mechanic, was convicted in 1991 and sentenced to 10 years in prison for the deaths

of two baggage handlers in an explosion at Tokyo's Narita airport. Reyat, who insists he is innocent, was convicted on the basis of circumstantial evidence.

London must consent to any new charges because Reyat, who had lived in British Columbia (B.C.) for several years, was extradited from Britain for his alleged involvement in the Tokyo explosion. The British home secretary must agree to the laying of new charges since they weren't included in the original extradition order.

Reyat's lawyer, Kuldip Chaggar, is protesting the refusal of B.C. authorities to grant his client legal aid to defend his rights in the United Kingdom. This is despite the fact that "they have no real evidence against him" other than "hearsay" Chaggar explained. He has been judged guilty and is being denied his "right to a defense and to a free trial."

Chaggar said that prosecutors delivered three boxes of material to his client at the Matsqui penitentiary, near Vancouver. "It's full of presumptions and innuendo. I don't know how they can extradite him on something so serious on the basis of that," he stated.

"There has been a tremendous, concerted, and deliberately orchestrated media cam-

paign to label the entire Sikh community as well as individuals" as terrorists, Chaggar stressed. "There is no presumption of innocence, only a presumption of guilt."

Supporters of Reyat have set up a web site that explains some of the facts about the violations of Reyat's basic democratic rights. Reyat was offered parole from prison, it states, with "inducements of cash, freedom, and immunity from future prosecution" if he would testify against others for planting a bomb on the Air India plane. "As a direct consequence of Mr. Reyat's refusal to concede to false allegations, he has been forced to serve 13 years without parole, and remains incarcerated today." Reyat was initially jailed in Britain in 1988 and held until a decision was made on his extradition to Canada.

Reyat's supporters are asking defenders of democratic rights to contact Jack Straw, British home secretary, and ask him "not to give consent to the charging of Mr. Inderjit Singh Reyat without due process and access to a full and fair hearing in the British courts," according to a petition being circulated.

Steve Penner is a meat packer in Langley, British Columbia.

THE MILITANT

Support freedom struggle in Ireland

The resistance of the Irish freedom fighters has brought a new generation into the Republican movement who join with those who have refused to give up their demands for a united Ireland. Read the 'Militant' for continued coverage of this struggle.



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Editor: MARTIN KOPPEL

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Greg McCartan, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ELENA TATE

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Military policy disputes mark Munich meeting

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Differences between Washington and the European powers on questions of military policy in Europe dominated discussion at the annual Conference on Security Policy, held in Munich, Germany, February 3-4. Both the implicit undermining of U.S. domination on the continent posed by the European Union's (EU) rapid reaction force and Washington's plans to proceed with the development of an antimissile shield caused friction in and around the gathering.

The Munich event illustrated the growing rivalry among the handful of major imperialist nations in North America, Europe, and Japan as they compete for economic and diplomatic advantage. In Europe, this rivalry is putting new strains on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) imperialist military alliance.

Statements by U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld underlined for the European rulers their relative weakness and disunity. He pointedly refused to utter the words "European Union" once during the conference. Rumsfeld reasserted Washington's opposition to any challenge to the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance and its concern over the European Security and Defense Initiative, under whose auspices the 60,000-strong rapid reaction force is being prepared.

The proposal for such an initiative was originally adopted at an EU summit in December 1999. Since then a military planning staff of around 50 has been established—less than one-eighth the number of NATO's corresponding personnel.

"I'm looking at [the rapid reaction force] fresh and I'm a little worried," said Rumsfeld at the conference. "Actions that could reduce NATO's effectiveness by confusing duplication or by perturbing the transatlantic link [between the U.S. and Europe] would...run the risk of injecting instability."

Republican senator John McCain implied still stronger opposition. "What the transatlantic partnership requires is not new institutions, but improved capabilities," he said.

London vs. Paris

Differences have emerged between London and Paris, the original sponsors of the proposal, on the EU force. The *Financial Times* reported that "links between the EU rapid reaction force and NATO have yet to be finalized, and Britain and France appear to be at odds over some of the details. Britain insists that preparations for the EU force's operations should be done by NATO planners at the alliance's headquarters at Mons in Belgium. France has suggested that NATO planners should only be involved in EU operations if NATO military assets are used."

For the moment, the rulers in Germany, the strongest of the European powers, have sided with London in this debate—a stance that has exacerbated the growing rift between Paris and Berlin.

London is weighing in against proposals by Paris to use the rapid reaction force as a means to loosen Washington's grip on the continent. As the *New York Times* bluntly observed on February 8, "Washington is...counting on the British to counter the French, who have sought to use the initiative to diminish American influence in Europe."

Following a meeting with UK foreign secretary Robin Cook two days after the conference, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell observed, "If we approach the European security and defense initiative in the way that Robin and I have discussed, with an understanding that it is firmly embedded in NATO, and we're not duplicating planning capabilities and that we are adding to the overall strategic capacity of both NATO and EU countries, then there is no reason to

see this as destabilizing NATO in any way."

Washington's domination of military affairs in Europe was reinforced during the war in the Balkans during the 1990s, when the U.S. military mounted massive bombing campaigns to impose the partition of first Bosnia-Herzegovina and then Kosova. Its European allies were largely left as spectators to U.S. military power.

Kenneth Adelman, who served as an assistant to Rumsfeld in the administration of Gerald Ford, noted smugly in a February 6 *Wall Street Journal* commentary on the Munich conference that "U.S. high-tech prowess has become obvious in air, ship, and tank capabilities. It's even more so in intelligence, communications, and airlift."

The missile shield debate

Washington's arrogant promotion of the so-called National Missile Defense underlines this superiority. Representatives of both the Republican and Democratic parties spoke in favor of the National Missile Defense (NMD) program at Munich.

This "missile shield," initiated under the Clinton administration after the more ambitious "Star Wars" pursued by the Reagan administration was set aside, is designed to give the Pentagon the power to neutralize an opponent's missiles by knocking them out of the sky. Clinton alleged that such a development was necessary for defense against threats posed by "rogue nations." In reality, the NMD program represents a determined push by the U.S. rulers to gain a first-strike advantage over their rivals, especially the Russian and Chinese workers states—with the power to blackmail and bully that would go along with it.

The George Bush administration has steadily promoted a "more robust" missile shield, without yet spelling out any technological or budgetary details. The alternatives for the antimissile shield put forward by various pundits include an expansion of the present land-based program; missiles based on ships; air- and space-based interceptor missiles; and some combination of these different variants, known by the catchword "layered defenses."

Bush has also ordered an overall review of Washington's military forces, and a debate is under way among the rulers on how much to increase the military budget. While promoting the missile shield, Bush has floated the possibility of cutting back excess warheads and missiles in Washington's massive nuclear armory.

Both Moscow and Peking oppose the program. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Sun Yuxi warned on February 6 that it "will have a far-reaching and extensive negative impact on the global and regional strategic balance and stability." Moscow has reiterated its support for the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, whose provisions bar the development of a missile shield.

European governments expressing con-

500 rally for justice for Amadou Diallo



Around 500 people rallied February 4 in the Bronx, New York, on the second anniversary of Amadou Diallo's shooting death at the hands of four New York police officers. The participants protested the January 31 decision by the U.S. Justice Department officials not to prosecute the cops. Saikou Diallo, father of the slain man, told the crowd, "We will not stop with this [Justice Department] decision."

--JASON CORLEY

cerns about the plan include those of France and Sweden. French president Jacques Chirac told an Anglo-French summit on February 10 that he had "tremendous reservations" about the "hugely expensive" plan, predicting that it would upset international relations. Even UK foreign minister Robin Cook has said the ABM treaty should be respected.

German representatives, including keynote speaker Prime Minister Gerhard Schroeder, expressed reservations at the Munich conference about the missile development. The German Christian Democratic Party's Karl Lamers said that Europeans saw it as representing a "dream of [U.S.] invulnerability."

Rumsfeld disingenuously reassured the conference that a missile shield "doesn't threaten anyone." He was reacting in part to a statement at the conference by Henry Kissinger, who served as secretary of state from 1973 to 1977 under President Richard Nixon. Kissinger had spoken with candor, stating the system would be the "precursor to an American first strike" capability.

Clinging to the ABM treaty was "Cold War thinking," said Rumsfeld. Elsewhere Rumsfeld has described the treaty as "ancient history" and a "straitjacket."

The question of Russia—a weakened, yet still massively armed nuclear power—looms large among the concerns of the rulers of the European powers. In addition to the antimissile project, Washington is pushing to expand NATO eastward, a move also opposed by Moscow. Europe remains the scene of future conflict as U.S. imperialism pur-

sues its drive to ring Russia with a noose of steel and eventually attempt to militarily retake the country for capitalist exploitation. This prospect, which places Europe at the center of a future battleground, is one factor pressing the ruling classes in Europe to consider options other than those posed by Washington and to find ways to pursue what are often diverging interests.

"Increased European capabilities are a political imperative for both sides of the Atlantic," said Gen. Wesley Clark, former NATO commander in Europe who was present at the conference. "But the evolution of European capabilities should not distance the European Union from NATO. Europe must not become a middle ground between NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other."

The *New York Times* took note of a statement by German defense minister Rudolf Scharping, that "caused American military commanders to shudder: 'As the European Union develops its security and defense policy and becomes an independent actor, we must determine our security policy with Russia, our biggest neighbor,'" Scharping said.

The *Times* observed that the "specter of Europe—and particularly its central power, Germany—adopting a more independent stance from NATO and playing close heed to Russia is chilling for the United States, and hard to reconcile with the Atlantic alliance that has preserved Europe's stability and advanced American interests for more than a half-century."

Workers halt railroad's genetic testing

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Workers at Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. have forced the company to discontinue the practice of ordering genetic testing of employees who submit claims for carpal tunnel syndrome.

Charging a violation of their civil rights, workers filed a lawsuit February 9 through the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The suit demanded the company end its practice of forcing workers who file carpal tunnel claims to

provide blood samples for use in DNA testing. The syndrome is a leading workplace occupational hazard.

In the lawsuit, filed in federal court in Sioux City, Iowa, the commission said the blood tests violate workers' "most intimate privacy rights," and are "an invasion of privacy and a person's bodily integrity."

The lawsuit says employees were not asked to consent to the tests, and at least one worker who refused to provide a blood sample was threatened with losing his job.

Four unionized workers—three from Nebraska and one from North Dakota—said the railroad also required them to submit lists of all family members who had been diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome.

This was the first time the EEOC has challenged genetic testing. The commission said these tests violate the Americans With Disabilities Act. "Any test which purports to predict future disabilities, whether or not it is accurate, is unlikely to be relevant to the employee's present ability to perform his or her job," stated commissioner Paul Miller.

The company began its testing program last year to see if workers with carpal tunnel syndrome carried a genetic trait called Chromosome 17 deletion. In response to the lawsuit, Burlington Northern announced that the tests had been stopped.

Company spokesman Richard Russack claimed the objective of the DNA testing was "to determine whether there was any evidence that the claimed carpal-tunnel injury may have been the result of a genetic predisposition as opposed to a job-related injury." He added that the company now thought it was "in our best interests" to stop the tests.

Burlington Northern said about 125 employees have filed claims since March 2000 for carpal-tunnel syndrome related injuries, and that about 20 of them had undergone DNA tests.

Embassy bombing trial undermines rights

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men are among 21 who have been indicted in the allegedly terrorist conspiracy. Three have been detained in Britain, 13 are at large, and one will be tried separately, the *Washington Post* reported February 6.

Washington and the big business media has been waging a propaganda campaign to obtain convictions of the defendants. Three weeks before the trial opened the *New York Times* ran a three-part series on "Islamic militants" who are allegedly taught terrorism to wage "holy war." The article contained maps supposedly depicting terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, includ-

ing several run by bin Laden where it claimed 5,000 recruits have been trained. "If the international terrorism that has haunted Americans for the last decade has a home, it is Afghanistan, the place that comes closest to the extremists' ideal of a state ruled by the strict code of Islamic law," wrote Judith Miller for the *Times*.

"The role of Afghanistan is now absolutely clear," declared Michael Sheehan, former coordinator of the State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. "Every Islamic militant we've looked at goes scurrying back there for sanctuary."

Two weeks after the explosions in 1998,

the Clinton administration ordered an unannounced military attack on the Sudan and Afghanistan. U.S. warplanes launched 79 cruise missiles on Khartoum, the capital of Sudan and several sites in Afghanistan. The White House claimed those bombings were in "self-defense" against an "international terrorist network" allegedly organized by bin Laden who is reportedly living in Afghanistan.

The target in the Sudan, claimed with utmost authority by Washington at the time to be a terrorist chemical weapons factory, was later proved to be a plant used to produce medical drugs.

Socialist gets hearing from workers, youth in LA mayoral race

BY FRANCISCO CIPRIANO
AND AL DUNCAN

LOS ANGELES—The Socialist Workers Party campaign of Wendy Lyons for mayor of Los Angeles is receiving a warm response from working people here who face an unfolding energy crisis and the beginning of a slowdown in the capitalist economy.

Lyons, a garment worker, has been certified to be on the ballot in the April primary election after she turned in 1,000 signatures to city officials. Many workers gladly signed the petitions when they heard the candidate's proposals for the energy crisis.

"We call for taking the energy industry out of the hands of the private profiteers," Lyons told one worker during the petitioning drive. "We demand the government nationalize Southern California Edison, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the whole energy industry. We call for energy to be run by a publicly elected board independent of the government, with workers in the industry controlling the conditions of production. We demand the books of the industry be opened."

"I'll sign for that!" he said, as did many Lyons spoke with along similar lines.

Some of the most positive responses came from immigrant workers. For example, a woman who used to be a teacher in Mexico explained that she left her home a year ago to escape oppression and exploitation only to find even worse conditions for non-English-speaking immigrants in the United States.

'I've been looking for this'

Three young people who met supporters of Lyons's campaign attended a recent forum on "The Fraud of the Energy Crisis." Jeremy, a 23-year-old student at Los Angeles Community College, said he liked what Lyons had to say. "I've been looking for something like this for a long time," he said. Benjamin, who attends Trade Tech, expressed interest in joining classes socialists organize on issues covered in Pathfinder books.

Lyons spoke to 50 students at the University of Southern California for nearly an hour February 2. Her presentation was followed by a lively discussion period and a number of hands were still in the air when the class ended.

On February 6 Lyons participated in a forum featuring candidates for mayor at Los Angeles Community College. In her opening remarks she said, "The Socialist Workers campaign is a working-class voice in this election, building solidarity with working people from janitors and bus operators who

stood up for all workers here in Los Angeles when they carried out their magnificent strikes, to Palestinians fighting for their homeland, to the workers and farmers of Cuba defending their socialist revolution."

"We are discussing at plant gates," continued Lyons, "on picket lines and protests, and in working-class communities how working people can transform the trade unions into fighting organizations that can defend all workers from the impact of the crisis of the capitalist economy, such as layoffs, the energy crisis, police brutality, and the drive to new wars as the U.S. pushes for nuclear first-strike capacity with its antimissile program. In the face of this crisis we need to organize a revolutionary struggle by millions of working people to replace the capitalist government in Washington with one of our own."

After discussing the demand to nationalize the energy industry, she said, "We say not one penny to bail out the billionaires who got us into this mess. We call for full compensation for every worker who has been laid off or lost work hours due to the rolling blackouts; we call for full compensation for farmers who have had to dump milk or lose their crops due to power outages. We say 'No' to nuclear power, which is unsafe, and 'No' to relaxing the pollution controls and drilling in the Arctic for the profits of the energy trusts."

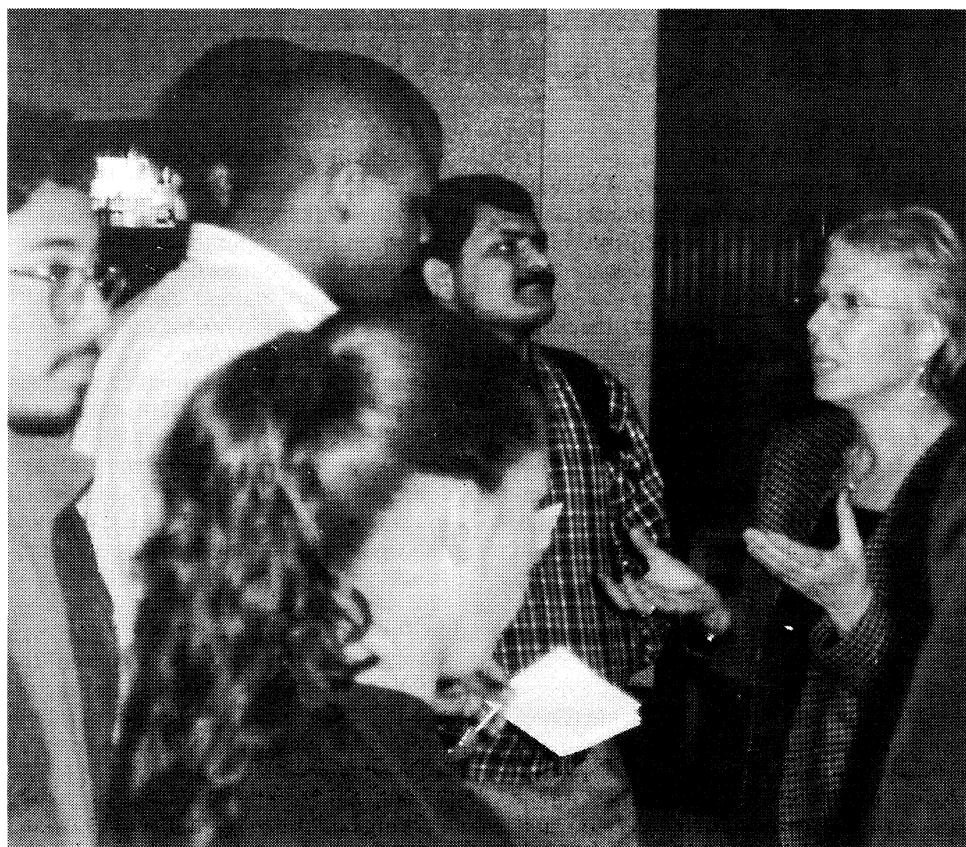
Equal rights for immigrants

She called for equal rights for all immigrants and support for workers at Royal Airlines Laundry in their attempt to organize a union.

One participant asked the candidates what they would do "about the problem of undocumented workers?" Lyons said the "capitalist class goes all over the world exploiting labor; workers should have the right to go where they want in order to live and find work. We are for a world without borders. There is no 'problem' of undocumented workers for the working class," she said. "Immigrant workers have strengthened the working class. The recent strikes of janitors and bus operators, who are largely immigrant workers, illustrate this."

Another person asked about reforming the Los Angeles Police Department, which has been embroiled in revelations over cops in the Rampart Division involved in more than 100 frame-ups and acts of violence against working people.

"There is no way to reform the LAPD," said Lyons. "The Rampart revelations just



Militant/Francisco Cipriano
Socialist candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, Wendy Lyons, right, talks with students at Los Angeles Community College after speaking at campus forum.

lift a tiny corner of the veil over the standard operating procedures of the police all over the country. The job of these cops is to 'protect and serve' the interests of big business, including the big business of drugs, and to brutalize workers so the rulers keep us in our place. We call for jailing the guilty cops every time they carry out these acts. And the only way this will happen is to follow the example of families and friends of victims of police brutality who have organized mobilizations of working people to demand justice."

Lyons said that in the garment industry where she works many bosses do not pay the legal minimum wage. Some ads for garment jobs say "We pay the minimum" as a selling point. "It's widely known that the garment bosses are breaking the law by not paying the minimum wage," she said, "yet you never see the LAPD move against these lawbreakers."

In response to a question about funds for new schools, Lyons said, "One of the hallmarks of the system that puts profits before human needs is the attitude to social questions such as education. Billions go to bail out the energy trusts while there are peanuts for schools. We are going into a downturn, with more layoffs. We call for the labor movement to take up the fight to protect workers by demanding a massive program of public works for schools and other human needs such as housing and day-care centers."

"The fact that these human needs get short shrift points to the need for a workers and farmers government to replace capitalist

rule," Lyons said. Pointing to revolutionary Cuba, the socialist candidate said that before the revolution, "the vast majority of the population was illiterate. After the revolution a historic literacy campaign was launched by the new government. Young people from the cities who knew how to read and write went to the countryside to teach the peasants those skills. But they didn't go just to teach. They also went to learn from the peasants who were a backbone of the revolution. It strengthened the alliance between the workers and peasants, and the Cubans are one of the most highly educated populations in the world today with the right to free education through the university level."

"The best thing young people can do is join the revolutionary movement and fight for working people to take power," she said in response to a question on youth. Lyons gave some examples of the deepening mood of resistance among workers, from those in Los Angeles who have carried out strikes, to coal miners fighting against attacks on health care, to meat packers who are organizing to build unions, to the fight against police brutality, to the Palestinian people fighting for a return to their homeland. She also pointed to the example of recent actions by auto workers in Britain striking against layoffs, and labor mobilizations in France, Ecuador, and Argentina.

At the end of the meeting many students gathered around the Pathfinder literature table to continue discussions with Lyons and other campaign supporters and to find out how to get involved.

Workers at Detroit newspapers ratify new pacts

BY CHUCK GUERRA

DETROIT—The labor dispute at the Detroit newspapers officially came to an end December 17 when two Teamsters locals ratified new contracts.

Some 2,500 workers went on strike July 13, 1995, against the *Detroit News*, the *Detroit Free Press*, and the Detroit Newspaper Agency, which prints and distributes both papers. Newspaper employees had been working for three months under expired contracts, but walked out when management declared negotiations at an impasse and began unilaterally imposing their own terms, which included the elimination of hundreds of jobs, increased workloads, contracting out work, replacement of full-time employees with part-timers who would be ineligible to join the union, and merit pay raises for reporters instead of across-the-board increases.

Prior to the Teamsters' vote, members of the International Typographical Union, the Graphic Communications International Union, and the Newspaper Guild had each approved contracts with the papers.

The Detroit newspaper strike drew the attention of the labor movement throughout the United States with its massive Saturday night picket lines, joined by unionists from throughout metro Detroit and many other cities, which several times delayed shipment of the Sunday paper or

forced the newspaper companies to go to great expense to get the paper distributed.

The unions filed complaints of unfair labor practices against the newspaper companies with the National Labor Relations Board at the beginning of the strike. The proceedings before the NLRB and various courts stretched across the entire five-year period of the dispute. On Feb. 14, 1997, the newspaper union officials made an unconditional offer to return to work. The companies responded to the unions' offer by agreeing only to put the former strikers on a preferential callback list, to be returned to work alongside replacement workers as openings became available.

The last major action in support of the locked out newspaper workers took place on June 21, 1997, when tens of thousands from many different states converged on Detroit for an AFL-CIO-sponsored rally. Two days earlier, a National Labor Relations Board judge ruled that the newspaper companies had engaged in illegal labor practices and ordered the newspapers to immediately take back all the locked out employees. The companies refused to comply and appealed the decision. The various rounds in the legal battle stretched out for another three years, until the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., ruled in favor of the newspaper companies last July.

The contracts approved by the unions

follow a similar pattern: A 2 percent wage increase each year after the first year of the contract, possible bonuses of up to \$3,000 based on increased circulation of the papers, and imposition of the antiunion "open shop." Guild members have a different pay agreement, with most newsroom employees at the *News* eligible for only merit pay increases and those at the *Free Press* eligible for merit increases on top of their 2 percent annual raises.

According to approximate figures given by the *Free Press*, 240 strikers crossed the picket line during the walkout, 200 were fired for picket line activity, 800 retired or found other jobs, 560 have been recalled since the return to work offer, 364 declined a job offer when recalled, and 185 remained on the recall list as of December. In the course of the strike, the newspaper bosses eliminated about 700 jobs.

The newspaper companies report they lost \$100 million during the strike. Circulation of the daily papers dropped from 900,000 before the strike to 603,097 as of September 2000 and Sunday circulation has gone from 1.13 million to 748,383, although not all of that slide was necessarily due to the unions' boycott, which has now been lifted.

Chuck Guerra is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876 in Detroit.

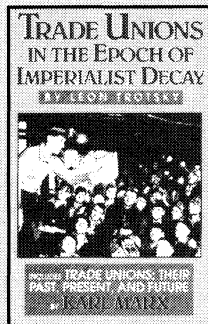
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Workers, farmers lose in energy 'bailout'

BY WILLIAM SMITH

NEW YORK—At a February 2 Militant Labor Forum held at the Pathfinder Bookstore in the Garment District of New York, Bernie Senter spoke about California's energy crisis. Senter, from the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco, works as a meat packer and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120.

"The energy monopolies are owned and controlled privately," Senter told the audience. "They are capitalist corporations that make decisions based exclusively on what will turn a profit. These energy giants set prices, restrict supplies, and manipulate reserves."

Senter noted that the two utility companies Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison (SoCal Edison) have been on the brink of bankruptcy, accumulating \$12.7 billion in debts from companies they buy energy from.

"Last year, a megawatt hour of power, enough to power 1,000 homes, cost around \$30. Now it sells for upwards of \$400, and sometimes over \$1,000, on the spot market," he said.

Workers have faced scattered layoffs and plant closings, Senter pointed out. "But up to now, the crisis has had a bigger impact on farmers." Senter explained that, at times, dairy farmers have been unable to get their milk processed at creameries, forcing them to dump their milk. Many farmers use large quantities of energy to irrigate and keep their crop from freezing in the winter.

"When a crisis like this breaks out, some of what is usually behind-the-scene wheeling-and-dealing comes to the surface," he said. "The real workings of industry under capitalism gets exposed a little. Ruling circles are bickering over how to make working people pay for their disaster. At times like this, you can see a bit of the underbelly of the monopolies."

The utility companies PG&E Co. and SoCal Edison are owned by parent companies, PG&E Corp. and Edison International. These parent companies operate power generating plants of their own and sell electricity to their subsidiary utilities for a profit.

Large chunks of both of the utilities' debts are owed to their parent companies. For example, \$2 billion of SoCal Edison's \$4.5 billion debt is owed to Edison International. While PG&E and SoCal Edison have been going deeper and deeper into debt, the parent company has gotten richer and richer.

Bondholders make profits

"Stock and bond holders have made enormous profits as the utilities have been bled dry by the parent companies," Senter said. "PG&E turned over one-third of its cash flow to its corporate parent in the first nine months of last year. And they paid \$632 million in dividends during that time. The total since 1997 is \$4.7 billion."

The parent companies have taken steps to shield their profits and assets from the looming bankruptcy of the utilities. Through a practice called "ring fencing" they won approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to insulate their assets from the credit problems of the utilities.

Senter pointed to a *New York Times* article that explained how state government legislation and policy decisions, such as rate increases, are being crafted by Wall Street investment banks who serve as advisors to the government. These banks, such as Goldman, Sachs; Credit Suisse First Boston; and Citigroup have big stakes in utility and power companies. The speaker of the

state Assembly, Robert Hertzberg, has retained Credit Suisse. Robert Rubin of Citigroup is advising Gov. Gray Davis.

"There are grave concerns that the utilities might go bankrupt," Senter said. "It appears that ruling circles want to avoid this at all costs. The scale of the bankruptcy would be enormous, the first and third largest in U.S. history. Energy companies, owed billions by the utilities, would be left holding the bag. Many pension funds and investment portfolios contain utility stocks."

That's why the state government is putting together a bailout package, the brunt of which will be born by workers, farmers, and small businessmen.

Nationalize the energy monopolies

"In face of this crisis," said Senter, "working people need to respond with proposals that serve our needs. We constantly hear proposals that will bail out the bosses, all of which we pay for."

"Energy is a vital resource to society. And it is being controlled by monopolies whose exclusive concern is making profit. Something has to be done because the lives and livelihoods of workers, farmers, and small businessmen are endangered by their predatory practices."

"We should demand the books of the energy monopolies be opened for inspection to learn what is really going on," he said. "Oil workers, coal miners, and electrical generating plant workers can play a big role in getting out the truth about the situation and help expose the artificial shortages, price gouging, and back room deals."

"The labor movement needs to mount a campaign to demand that the current government nationalize the energy industry. They should become public utilities rather than private enterprises," Senter told the audience.

In the discussion period at the forum one person asked Senter what would happen when the industry was nationalized.

Cuba's example

Senter pointed to the revolutionary struggle that would have to be waged by working people to win this reform. He noted how Cuba, in the early years of the revolution, mobilized working people to nationalize oil refineries that refused to process oil received from the Soviet Union. "A nationalized energy industry must be run by an independent board appointed by the unions, community organizations, civil rights groups, and others who will insure that it is run in the interests of the majority."

Another side to the working-class response to the energy disaster is the need to fight for immediate relief for workers and farmers.

"Nobody's heat or oil should be cut off," Senter said. "Anyone laid off should get full pay. Farmers should be given immediate assistance. Food and dairy processing plants that have shut operations due to energy costs need to be reopened."

"A big factor in our success is the key role that workers in the energy industry

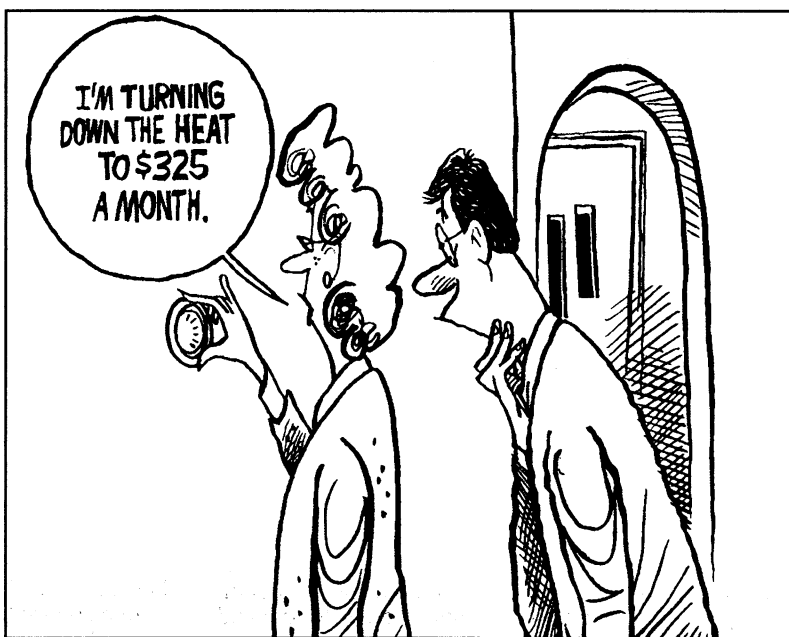
themselves have to play in policing the industry for working people and making sure that all the facts are made public," said Senter.

"We are for more power plants," he continued. "But we don't buy the campaign to erode environmental regulations which the government and industry blame for high energy costs or to force working people to 'conserve' on fuel."

Eroding environmental regulations

The California state government is working overtime to shift attention away from those responsible for the energy crisis—both the generating and utility monopolies—by focusing its fire on working people and small businesses to use energy "more efficiently."

Governor Davis has signed an extraordinary executive order giving county sheriffs and the California Highway Patrol the authority to cite businesses who don't curtail energy use after business hours up to \$1,000 a day starting March 15, when the program becomes mandatory. The emergency order lasts "until the governor rescinds it," said a spokesman. Violators face criminal misdemeanor charges.



The new law allows the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to raise rates for businesses and residential accounts who consume more than 130 percent of their so-called baseline usage.

The baseline, which appears on utility bills, is the minimum amount of power needed, according to the PUC, to run an average home. Usage above the baseline is billed at a higher rate. If you go over your baseline in a given month, which is almost certain, power gets more expensive for that extra amount. Lawmakers estimate that almost all customers could see a rate increase on about 30 percent of the power they use.

Senter pointed to the concerted campaign by the energy industry and their mouthpieces to use the energy crisis in California to panic working people into suspending their environmental concerns about nuclear power, offshore drilling, and refinery safety

in order to avert further energy shortages. These attacks have taken the form of what can only be called California-bashing. For example, Bradley Schiller, an economics professor at American University in Washington, D.C., wrote an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* called "California: The Free Lunch State," stating, "Californians have come to view free college, cheap electricity, and cheap rent as birthrights."

Indeed, this bashing was a central feature at the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee meeting held January 31. Several industry executives used the hearing as a forum to propose diluting environmental regulations. Keith Bailey, president of The Williams Companies, urged a relaxation of federal clean air standards so that all of California's power plants can operate at full capacity. Judi Johansen of PacifiCorp said that federal officials should reexamine regulations protecting spawning salmon at hydroelectric dams.

Federal government says no to caps

At a meeting of the Western Governors Association in Portland, Oregon, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, who was invited to the meeting, was warned that "out-

of-control" electricity costs were spreading economic havoc across their region. Abraham rejected a plea from several of the state leaders that the federal government impose temporary price caps on wholesale energy prices. "I have great concerns about [a price cap] and President Bush does too," he said.

One of the aims of the conference, according to Idaho governor Dirk Kempthorne's spokesman Mark Snider, will be to "look at temporary waivers of regulations that are impeding production, like air quality rules."

Senter said that the unions and all working people should reject every one of these arguments. "With an abundant supply of coal, thousands of mining jobs could be opened up, jobs the United Mine Workers of America union could help make

sure are safe and well-paid jobs. With scrubbers and other technology now available, coal can be burned cleanly without harmful emissions."

"What is happening today in the energy industry," Senter said, "will likely be repeated in many other industries. We don't know the pace or where the next blow will fall. Thousands of auto workers are being laid off."

"Working people need to wage a revolutionary struggle to make the wealth that we create benefit all of humanity," he said, "instead of the way it is now, where wealth is a cancer that will render life on this planet uninhabitable. This is why we need to revolutionize society and all social relations."

Bob Keller and Deborah Liatos, meatpacking workers in San Francisco, contributed to this article.

States make cuts in health, education

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In response to falling tax revenues in the wake of an economic slowdown, state governments throughout the South and the Midwest have begun cutbacks in education and health programs as part of implementing spending reductions of up to 15 percent. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which issued a largely optimistic report on budget prospects for the states in early January, has announced it is considering producing a revised, more gloomy projection after more than a dozen states made public plans for the cuts.

Arturo Perez, a budget specialist for the NCSL, said that last June "states reported their highest year-end balances in 20 years." Perez attributed the abrupt shift to "the softness in the economy." After Christmas holiday spending was lower than expected, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and other southern states that rely heavily on the sales tax to fund state programs began to announce cuts. Mississippi governor Ronald Musgrove announced a 3 percent cut in the state's education budget in early February.

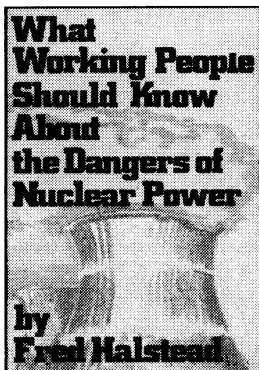
In Alabama, Gov. Don Siegelman cut the education budget by 6 percent, and the state legislature is considering cutting funds for school repair and after-school programs.

North Carolina, a state that has lost a substantial amount of revenue from taxes on capital gains as investors' earnings have slid, has also begun slashing social spending. Gov. Michael Easley, whose state faces a \$740 million shortfall, announced February 6 that he would probably declare a fiscal emergency, which would permit him to use state employee pension funds to balance the budget. North Carolina, like most states today, is required by law to balance the budget.

The tax shortfalls are occurring at the same time as many states are spending more on Medicaid, a government program to cover medical expenses of people who could not otherwise afford them. Raymond Scheppach, executive director of the National Governors Association, attributed this rise to increasing numbers of people in the Medicaid program, and higher costs of medications and managed care.

FROM PATHFINDER

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BY FRED HALSTEAD

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How rulers manipulate public opinion

As part of celebrating Black History Month, the *Militant* is reprinting the excerpt below, taken from a speech given by Malcolm X in Detroit on Feb. 14, 1965, one week before he was assassinated. The entire talk is printed in *February 1965: The Final Speeches*. Copyright © 1992 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY MALCOLM X

One of the shrewd ways that they use the press to project us in the eye or image of a criminal, they take statistics and with the press they feed these statistics to the public,

primarily the white public. Because there are some well-meaning persons in the white public as well as bad-meaning persons in the white public. And whatever the government is going to do, it always wants the public on its side, whether it's the local government, state government, federal government. So they use the press to create images. And at the local level, they'll create an image by feeding statistics to the press—through the press showing the high crime rate in the Negro community. As soon as this high crime rate is emphasized through the press, then people begin to look upon the Negro community as a community of criminals....

A very good example was the riots that took place here during the summer. I was in Africa, I read about them over there. If you'll notice, they referred to the rioters as vandals, hoodlums, thieves. They tried to make it appear that this wasn't—They tried to make it—And they did this. They skillfully took the burden off the society for its failure to correct these negative conditions in the Black community. It took the burden completely off the society and put it right on the community by using the press to make it appear that the looting and all of this was proof that the whole act was nothing but vandals and robbers and thieves, who weren't really interested in anything other

than that which was negative. And I hear many old, dumb, brainwashed Negroes who parrot the same old party line that the man handed down in his paper.

It was not the case that they were just knocking out store windows ignorantly. In Harlem, for instance, all of the stores are owned by white people, all of the buildings are owned by white people. Black people are just there, paying rent, buying the groceries. But they don't own the stores, clothing stores, food stores, any kind of stores; don't even own the homes that they live in. This is all owned by outsiders. And then these run-down apartment dwellings, the Black man in Harlem pays more money for it than the man down in the rich Park Avenue section. It costs us more money to live in the slum than it costs them to live down on Park Avenue. Black people in Harlem know this. And the white merchants charge us more money for food in Harlem—and it's the cheap food, it's the worst food; and we have to pay more money for it than the man has to pay for it downtown. So Black people know that they're being exploited and that their blood is being sucked and they see no way out of it.

A corrupt, hypocritical system

So finally, when the thing is sparked, the white man is not there; he's gone. The merchant is not there, the landlord is not there; the one he considers to be the enemy isn't there. So, they knock at his property. This is what makes them knock down the store windows and set fire to things, and things of that sort. It's not that they're thieves. But they try and project the image to the public that this is being done by thieves, and thieves alone. And they ignore the fact that no, it is not thievery alone. It's a corrupt, vicious, hypocritical system that has castrated the Black man; and the only way the Black man can get back at it is to strike it in the only way he knows how. [Applause]

They use the press. That doesn't mean that all reporters are bad. Some of them are good. I suppose. [Laughter] But you can take their collective approach to any problem and see that they can always agree when it gets to you and me. They knew that the Afro-American Broadcasting Company was giving this affair—which is designed to honor outstanding Black Americans, is it not? You'd find nothing in the newspapers to give the slightest hint that this affair was going to take place. Not one hint. Why? You see, you have many sources of news. If you don't think that they're in cahoots, watch. They're all interested, or none of them are interested. It's not a staggering thing. They're not going to say anything in advance [about an event] that's being given by any Black people who believe in functioning beyond the scope of the ground rules that are laid down by the liberal element of the power structure....

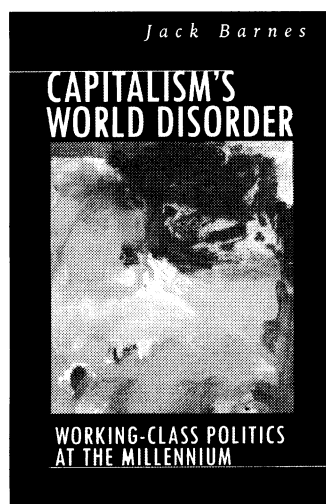
Another example at the international level of how skillfully they use this trickery was in the Congo. In the Congo, airplanes were dropping bombs on African villages. African villages don't have a defense against bombs. And the pilot can't tell who the bomb is being dropped upon. When a bomb hits a village, everything goes. And these pilots, flying planes filled with bombs, dropping these bombs on African villages, were destroying women, were destroying children, were destroying babies. You never heard any outcry over here about that. And it had started way back in June. They would drop bombs on African villages that would blow that village apart and everything in it—man, woman, child, and baby. No outcry, no sympathy, no support, no concern, because the press didn't project it in such a way that it would be designed to get your sympathy. They know how to put something so that you'll sympathize with it, and they know how to put it so you'll be against it. I'm telling you, they are masters at it. And if you don't develop the analytical ability to read between the lines in what they're saying, I'm telling you again—they'll be building gas ovens, and before you wake up you'll be in one of them, just like the Jews ended up in gas ovens over there in Germany. You're in a society that's just as capable of building gas ovens for Black people as Hitler's society was. [Applause]

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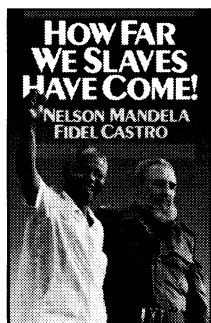
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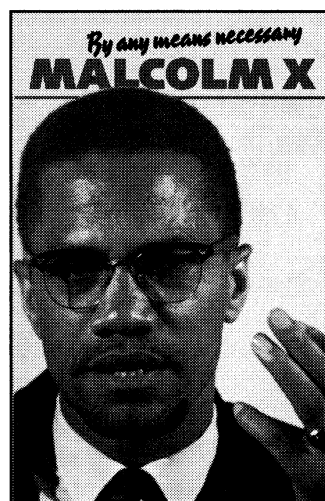
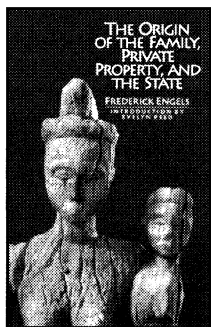
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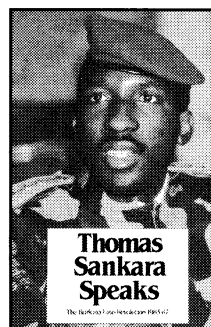
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Mexican president probes shift in energy and land ownership

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. president George Bush is making his first trip abroad to Mexico, stating that relations with the country will be high on the administration's agenda. A February 16 meeting has been set at the ranch of Mexico's new president, Vicente Fox.

One area the two presidents will explore is the exploitation of Mexico's energy resources. According to the *Financial Times*, Fox is promoting the notion of a "common energy policy stretching across the Nafta [North American Free Trade Agreement] frontiers."

Washington is seeking openings to build power plants in Mexico where there are fewer environmental restrictions and cheaper electricity can be easily exported to the United States.

At the end of January, Mexico began selling 50 megawatts a day of electricity to California—and as much as 250 megawatts during off-peak hours. While a small percentage of California's energy needs, it is a harbinger of what the Bush administration hopes will be a great deal more. A February 3 *San Francisco Chronicle* article commenting on this deal pointed out, "Those are relatively tiny amounts, compared with the state's peak demand of about 28,000 megawatts, but they are lighting a bright gleam in the eyes of politicians from Sacramento to Washington."

Fox, who prior to assuming the presidency on December 1 was head of the Coca-Cola company in Mexico, has made an initial move to undercut the nationalized oil industry by proposing opening to private foreign investment the huge Burgos dry natural gas field located just south of Texas, which could be used to produce electricity for export to the United States.

For decades all gas and oil production in Mexico has been nationalized and under the control of Pemex, the state oil enterprise. Pemex has been regarded by Mexican working people as a symbol of national sovereignty and dignity since the country's petroleum resources were taken back from pillage by British and U.S. monopolies in 1938 in response to huge anti-imperialist mobilizations by Mexican workers and peasants.

In the early 1990s in the face of massive opposition, the Mexican regime had to back off its announced plans to privatize petrochemical operations. With the collapse of the peso at the end of 1994 Washington's "rescue" plan took aim at making inroads against Mexico's nationalized energy industry. The Mexican government announced plans to sell off 61 secondary petrochemi-

cal plants for \$1.5 billion. But once again, rising nationalist opposition to this planned privatization move forced then Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo to back off, saying only a minority stake in these operations would be put up for sale.

Other imperialist-controlled investments in power production in Mexico are also in the works. According to the *Chronicle*, "U.S. and European power companies are building three power plants in Baja California that are expected to export up to 1,000 megawatts across the border."

Sempre Energy International—the San Diego-based company that owns Southern California's two largest utilities—just recently finished building a natural gas pipeline to Baja California's largest generating plant in Rosarito, and is building another pipeline from Arizona to another new plant under construction there.

As in the United States, manufacturing companies in Mexico are being affected by high natural gas prices, leading to mounting layoffs. For example, Hylsamex, Mexico's largest steel manufacturer, cut its payroll by 1,350 workers and has closed four plants since September.

"We have a power problem of our own, we have a natural gas problem of our own," insisted Mexican foreign minister Jorge Castaneda, in a visit to Washington in early February.

Bush opens border to Mexican trucks

Meanwhile, President George Bush announced February 7 that he was reversing a Clinton administration policy and would begin allowing Mexican trucks to haul goods throughout the United States. Bush's decision was announced the same day that an arbitration panel ruled that Washington was in violation of the NAFTA agreement for refusing since 1995 to allow Mexican trucks to operate long-haul routes between U.S. and Mexican destinations. Under this policy the approximately 5 million commercial trucks crossing the Mexican border each year were only allowed to drive 25 miles into U.S. territory before having to transfer their loads to trucks with drivers employed in the United States.

The first to be elected in 71 years who was not a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, Fox has made several other moves since assuming the presidency. He announced the closure of four army bases in the southeastern state of Chiapas, where peasants and Indians have been carrying out a fight for their rights and where the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN)



Workers assemble auto parts at *maquiladora* plant in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. U.S. companies have doubled the number of these for-export plants in Mexico.

is based. The Mexican president has also promised freedom for 18 jailed EZLN members, and sent to Congress a bill based on a peace accord signed with the Zapatistas in 1996, which according to the *Financial Times* "for four years had floated in a political no-man's land."

The new Mexican president is also seeking to make inroads on the right of small Mexican peasants to hold onto their land. The country's new agriculture minister, Javier Usabiaga, is dubbed the "garlic king" because his corporate farming operation controls 97 percent of Mexico's garlic exports.

Usabiaga is proposing what he calls a "new rural society," in which small farmers will be encouraged to sell or rent out their land. His aim is to drive many of these peasants off their land, consolidating ownership in the hands of wealthy landlords and capitalists. The issue of land was at the center of the Mexican revolution in the early 1900s that carried out a major redistribution of arable land from wealthy ranch owners to landless peasants. It became illegal to own more than 100 hectares. Today, more than half of all farmers still own five hectares or less (1 hectare = 2.47 acres).

The minister argues that these small farmers have become "lazy" as a result of government subsidies. "My father always told me, 'Never sow what you cannot sell.' It is more important to know how to sell than how to sow," he stated.

Towards this end, Usabiaga plans to encourage poor farmers to stop planting corn, which constitutes Mexico's staple food and occupies 70 percent of the country's farm land. He calls instead for training them to cultivate fruits and vegetables for sales in a more specialized market.

U.S. companies expand investments in Mexico plants

About 800 workers at Kukdong International, a Korean-owned company in Mexico's central Puebla state, conducted a three-day strike starting January 9 to protest wages of \$30 for a 45-hour workweek, rotten food, unsafe working conditions, physical mistreatment, and in support of their right to join an independent union—the National Workers Union. After several unionists were fired, the workers then occupied the plant. This factory, which makes clothing for Nike, supplies sweatshirts to at least 14 U.S. universities. Three days later police in full riot gear attacked the 300 workers who were on guard duty at the plant together with their family members. Fifteen injured workers were hospitalized.

Since 1994 when the North American Free Trade Agreement was signed, U.S. companies have nearly doubled the number of assembly plants they own and operate on the Mexican side of the U.S. border. These *maquiladoras* where pay is low, working conditions poor, and profits high, are able to re-export their products to the United States virtually tax- and tariff-free. In addition, any excess production can also be shipped off to 31 other countries, including the European Union, with which the Mexican government recently signed a trade agreement.

Currently there are 3,700 such plants in Mexico, 60 percent of them on the border, and the number is growing. For example, car production in Mexico—80 percent of which is exported to the United States—has more than doubled in the last five years. Mexico has now surpassed Japan as the second largest auto parts supplier to U.S. auto companies.

At the end of January, Motorola announced it was cutting 2,500 U.S. jobs and moving all its cellular phone production to its plant in Mexico's Chihuahua state; Xerox said that its production of digital office equipment would be moved to its plant in central Mexico; and Guilford Mills, a U.S. textile company, is investing \$100 million to transfer production of its cotton and lycra knitwear to a new plant in northern Mexico.

Living conditions in the cities and towns where these plants are located are abysmal. A February 11 *New York Times* feature article entitled "Chasing Mexico's Dream Puts Workers in Squallor and Borderland in Chaos," states, "All along the border, the land, the water and the air are thick with industrial and human waste. The National Water Commission reports that the towns and cities, strapped for funds, can adequately treat less than 35 percent of the sewage generated daily. About 12 percent of the people living on the border have no reliable access to clean water. Nearly a third live in homes that are not connected to sewage systems. Only about half the streets are paved."

—B.W.

Jersey cops drop charges due to racial profiling

BY MARK BARTON

NEWARK, New Jersey—Officials here have been forced to drop criminal charges against 128 defendants—including five currently behind bars—who were illegally stopped on New Jersey highways and then charged with possession of drugs or weapons.

The development was hailed by defenders of democratic rights and denounced by the police brass and their supporters.

Following the release of 91,000 pages of documents last November confirming the use of "profiling"—the long-term practice of stopping drivers simply because they are Black or Latino—many arrested following such searches had demanded that charges against them be dropped. Seventy-seven of 94 such cases have now been thrown out, Attorney General John Farmer announced February 2.

Farmer announced the same day that the state had also agreed to pay \$12.95 million to settle a civil case brought by four basketball players—three Black and one Latino—whose van was fired on by two white troopers in a notorious incident on the New Jersey Turnpike in April 1998. The settlement, the largest in state history, was the second around the issue of profiling.

At the end of December the state agreed to pay \$340,000 to a New York taxi driver

arrested after state cops claimed to have found drugs in the back seat of his vehicle. José Báez, who was eventually cleared of all charges, had spent 18 days in jail because the trooper who made the arrest failed to note in court papers that he was a cab driver whose passenger had fled.

The reluctance of state officials to throw out charges based on illegal evidence, despite nationwide coverage of the racist practices of highway police here, was demonstrated when Farmer labeled defendants in the dismissed cases as "criminals" who had escaped on a technicality.

"Let us be clear," Farmer said, "the defendants in these cases may have prevailed in their motions to suppress [evidence], but they are criminals nonetheless. All were carrying some form of contraband," he claimed. "It is, accordingly, impossible to view them as victims."

Edward Lennon, president of the State Troopers Fraternal Association of New Jersey, called the dismissal of charges against 128 defendants "reprehensible." "Troopers are out there doing their jobs, and now these arrests are thrown out en masse? I don't think that serves the public at all."

Two weeks earlier, on January 20, 600 cops and their supporters attended a rally in Woodbridge, a suburb south of here, in defense of the two troopers—John Hogan and

James Kenna—who face criminal charges in the 1998 Turnpike shooting. Speakers included rightist radio personality Bob Grant, who, according to an account of the rally in the local press, "dismissed the controversy over racial profiling as nonsense."

A standing ovation was given to Carl Williams, the former superintendent of the state police who was fired in 1999 after he made the statement that in a question of drugs "it's most likely a minority group that's involved." The rally was sponsored by the ultraright outfit Americop, headed by a sergeant on the police force of the northern suburb of Nutley.

In another indication of the attitude among police brass, a supervisor nominated Hogan for "Trooper of the Year" shortly after the Turnpike shooting. "He is among the best the New Jersey State Police have to offer," the recommendation said.

Hearings in the state legislature on profiling are scheduled for March and a class-action suit is being prepared on behalf of all victims of it.

"We estimate 100,000 to 175,000 people of color were stopped on the Turnpike, and in some cases searched," says attorney Neil Mullin, who filed initial papers in the class action suit in 1998. The suit, rejected by the state superior court, is currently before the state supreme court.

Book by Rodolfo Saldaña shows 'future'

Helps workers, farmers prepare for coming class battles, says Pathfinder

Below are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters at the joint launching by Pathfinder Press and Editora Política, the publishing house of the Communist Party of Cuba, of *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, by Rodolfo Saldaña.

Saldaña, who died last June, headed the underground urban network of the National Liberation Army, a 1966-67 revolutionary front in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara and Bolivian revolutionary Inti Peredo.

The platform at the February 9 meeting, held as part of the Havana International Book Fair, is described in the news article on the front page.

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BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

I would like to thank Editora Política and Compañero Harry Villegas for the opportunity to share with you today the launching of *Fertile Ground*, a slim volume whose size belies its importance and camouflages the unique historical contribution made by Rodolfo Saldaña that is recorded in its pages.

In his book *Pombo: a Man of Che's Guerrilla*, Compañero Villegas refers to the revolutionary campaign led by Che in Bolivia as "an epic chapter in the history of the Americas." Almost 35 years have passed since that epic unfolded, but the passage of time has not diminished its contribution to the struggles of the modern working-class movement that opened with the drafting of the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels for a small international workers organization more than a century and a half ago.

Like other great episodes in the history of the efforts by working people of city and countryside to open the road to a future with neither wars of imperial plunder nor inhuman exploitation and oppression in any of its guises—from the Paris Commune, to the October insurrection, to the assault on Moncada and the *Granma* landing—the Bolivian campaign led by Che stands as a testament to the revolutionary capacities of the toilers, in this case of the working men and women of our hemisphere.

As the Bolivian communist Rodolfo Saldaña documents in his account, the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 was not an isolated event. It was part of a rising wave of anti-imperialist struggle through-



Above, Militant/Mary-Alice Waters Left, Rodolfo Saldaña (right) with Che Guevara in Bolivia, November 1966; above, during April 1997 interview in Havana with Mary-Alice Waters and Mike Taber contained in new book *Fertile Ground*. "Saldaña was one of the many thousands of young people throughout both North and South America who responded to the deepening revolutionary struggles and possibilities opened by the Cuban victory," says Mary-Alice Waters.

battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country that created "fertile ground" for the revolutionary course Saldaña joined Che in fighting for. In doing so he gives the lie to those who claim that Che's *guerrilla* failed because it was a political adventure, ignorant of and alien to the conditions of Bolivia, that drew only indifference, at best, from the country's workers, peasants, and youth. Saldaña shows the opposite to be true. The developments in the class struggle in Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Peru alone over just the half decade following Che's murder provide striking confirmation.

Second is the unique picture Rodolfo Saldaña provides of the political trajectory of cadres of the Bolivian Communist Party such as himself and Rosendo García Maismán, the leader of the mine workers federation at Siglo XX, Bolivia's largest tin mine. Saldaña's account of the political work he and a few others did in the mines—winning García Maismán and many others to the revolutionary movement—goes a long way towards explaining why they were among the small handful who joined with Che to chart a course toward revolutionary struggle to overthrow the military dictatorship, and who broke with the hesitations or outright opposition of the party leadership and helped found the ELN, the National Liberation Army.

Along the way, Saldaña dismisses—as utterly ignorant of the realities—those who to have sought to drive a wedge between Che and Fidel, between Che and the revolution he helped to lead, by slandering the Cuban leadership for supposedly failing to provide the necessary logistical support for Che and his comrades.

All this carries special weight, coming as it does from virtually the last remaining voice of the Bolivian revolutionaries who joined Che and whose entire life trajectory was true to his early convictions. Pombo's eloquent foreword to the book pays tribute to the revolutionary attributes and human qualities of Saldaña in a manner that could only be done by one of his comrades-in-

arms, someone whose life was in Saldaña's hands in the most difficult and dangerous of days.

Fertile Ground, however, is not primarily about the past. It is about the present and the future. It is not only about Bolivia, but about the Americas that are once again being propelled toward sharpening class struggle by the intensifying wage slavery and debt slavery born of the lawful workings of the capitalist system worldwide. We need only to look at the headlines from Ecuador or Argentina to see storm clouds gathering on the horizons.

Fertile Ground is about the kind of men and women who will emerge from battles to come and transform themselves as they fight to transform the conditions of their lives.

To be prepared for the titanic battles that are coming, however, new generations will have to conquer the lessons and discover true examples of the revolutionary past. They will have to study and internalize the lessons of struggle that have been paid for in blood by those whose legacy we can inherit. That task in relation to the revolutionary campaign led by Che in Bolivia would be qualitatively more difficult without the testament Saldaña left us. As several revolutionary-minded young people in the United States who recently read portions of Saldaña's account in the pages of the *Militant* commented to me with surprise, they knew nothing of the history of struggle in Bolivia that was the foundation for Che's political course.

That is why Pathfinder decided to publish this important volume, something that could not have been done without the collaboration of Editora Política, and especially the determined efforts of Compañera Irida Aguirrechu, to assure that this valuable contribution to our collective legacy would not be lost. The Spanish edition of *Fertile Ground* will be indispensable to us in the United States as well.

The support of Rodolfo's longtime companion Gladys Brizuela was also greatly appreciated, and the historic photos we were together able to rescue from crumbling newspaper clippings that she had carefully guarded over the years enriched the political quality of the book immeasurably.

Along with Che's *Bolivian Diary* and *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla*, as well as Inti Peredo's *My Campaign With Che*, English-language editions of which have all been published by Pathfinder in recent years, *Fertile Ground* makes the lessons of

Books for Cuba: a special appeal

Militant readers have for many years been contributing regularly to our "Books for Cuba" Fund. The fund makes it possible for Pathfinder Press to fill the frequent requests it receives from libraries, schools, political organizations, and others in Cuba for complimentary copies of a broad range of Pathfinder titles.

The fund also makes it possible for Pathfinder to sell a large selection of titles at the Havana International Book Fair in pesos at prices most Cubans can afford.

This year the Books for Cuba Fund is helping to make possible the donation of 300 copies of *Haciendo historia* for distribution by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution to each of its municipal groups.

Since December more than \$2,300 has been raised for the fund, but contributions of any size are still needed.

Checks can be made payable to the *Militant*, earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund," and mailed to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.



March for immigrant rights in Washington Waters, "has transformed the composition: social consciousness of working people inside working class, injecting broader historical traditions of struggle."

'e of our America'

r president Mary-Alice Waters

the revolutionary class struggle in Bolivia more accessible to us all.

I would also like to thank the more than 200 Pathfinder volunteers around the world whose collective efforts, working together through the Internet, allowed Pathfinder's small full-time staff to produce *Fertile Ground* in record time so we could have it here for the Havana International Book Fair.

I would like to end by underscoring one point about the importance of this book for those within the United States who chart a course to build a communist movement capable of emulating the revolutionary trajectory of the working people of Cuba and their leadership.

Perhaps the biggest change in the Ameri-



cas and the world these last 35 years is registered by the increasing homogeneity from one country to the next in our conditions of life, work, and exploitation. Washington's brutal, imperial domination of our hemisphere has driven millions of toilers from every corner of the Americas across the borders, however fortified they may be, and into the imperialist heartland. This historic new wave of immigration has transformed the composition and increasingly affects the knowledge and social consciousness of working people inside the United States. It has strengthened, not weakened, the United States working class, injecting broader historical perspectives and fertilizing its legacy with new traditions of struggle.

It is Mexican and Central American workers in the U.S., to give but one small example, who are today helping to reestablish the first of May as a day of working-class solidarity and action in North

America. Born as a workers holiday more than a century ago out of the struggles of labor in the U.S. for the eight-hour day, in recent years the tradition of May Day as a mass celebration of the working class had all but vanished into a ritual of little significance to most working people. Its rebirth is but one of the many small expressions of the long-gestating changes that have begun to mark the class struggle in the United States.

The dramatic photo on the front cover of the Pathfinder edition of *Fertile Ground*—of tin miners in Oruro, Bolivia, taking to the streets in 1964, sticks of dynamite in hand, to condemn the Bolivian regime for the murder of students demonstrating against the government—will not seem alien or exotic to workers and farmers in the United States today whose resistance to the capitalist economic and political pressures on them is intensifying. Nor will it seem foreign to revolutionary-minded youth attracted to these struggles. To the contrary, in that photo they



Granma

Demonstrators march beneath banner of Bolivian Workers Federation in defense of the Cuban revolution in early 1960s. In *Fertile Ground*, Saldaña places the struggle of the guerrilla front led by Che Guevara "in the context of the unresolved battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country," says Waters.

will be able to see their own faces in the crowd. In the mines and factories and fields across the North American continent, *Fertile Ground* will be welcomed and read as part of our own history.

Therein lies the importance of Rodolfo Saldaña's account of the class struggle in Bolivia, which gave meaning to his life.

And there lies the future of our America that is fast approaching.

Havana meeting launches 'Fertile Ground'

Continued from Front Page

Havana book fair, was one of the titles that sparked the most interest among the thousands who visited Pathfinder's booth during the nine-day book festival. Many were drawn to the stand by a blow-up of the book's striking cover. The 96-page volume includes a foreword by Harry Villegas; an introduction by the book's editor, Mary-Alice Waters; a biography of Saldaña; a chronology; index; list of further readings; and 11 pages of photos.

Villegas, now a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces who is also known by his nom de guerre, Pombo, was a member of the general staff of the guerrilla front led by Guevara in Bolivia. Its goal was to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and youth to overthrow the U.S.-backed military dictatorship in that country and open the way to socialist revolution in South America.

Fifty people crowded into the "Fernando Ortiz" hall at the historic San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress, where the fair is being held, to attend the book launching. Waters, Juan Carretero, and Villegas were the featured speakers. Also present on the speakers platform were Gladys Brizuela, Saldaña's long-time companion; Eneida Markov, from the office of Interior Minister Abelardo Colomé Ibarra; and Andrés Pineda, of the Americas Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

The event was chaired by Irida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, who edited the Spanish edition of the book brought out by the Havana-based publisher. Aguirrechu described how the interview with Saldaña came about in 1997, the 30th anniversary of Guevara's death. At that time, while living and working in Havana, Saldaña provided considerable help in the preparation of *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'*, Villegas's firsthand account of the Bolivian campaign, which Pathfinder publishes in English and Editora Política in Spanish. In the course of this collaboration, Saldaña, who had previously given virtually no interviews, agreed to talk about these events with Pathfinder editors Michael Taber and Mary-Alice Waters.

In *Fertile Ground*, Saldaña, who as a youth joined the Communist Party of Bolivia in 1950, recounts how he worked in the Siglo XX tin mines in order to win miners and other workers to a revolutionary course. He describes the sharp class battles that unfolded in Bolivia in the 1950s and '60s, which, as he put it, created "fer-

tile ground" for building a revolutionary movement in Bolivia and more broadly in South America.

In her talk (see page 8), Waters explained how Saldaña, in the pages of this book, gives the lie to the charge that Guevara's *guerrilla* was a political adventure alien to the class struggle unfolding in that country and region, and how developments in the Southern Cone of Latin America following Che's murder confirmed the correctness of his revolutionary initiative. Most importantly, Waters noted, *Fertile Ground* is not primarily about the past but about the present and future—the sharpening capitalist offensive in the world today and the growing opportunities to build a revolutionary movement.

Guerrilla front in northern Argentina

Waters was followed by Juan Carretero, president of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL). Carretero was centrally involved in the Cuban leadership's collaboration with Guevara's guerrilla front in Bolivia and in Cuba's support to a number of other guerrilla initiatives. The meeting to launch *Fertile Ground* was, in fact,

the first time Carretero was publicly identified as the Cuban revolutionary known by the nom de guerre Ariel.

Carretero spoke of Saldaña's involvement in supporting the growing revolutionary struggles throughout Latin America in the early 1960s, especially his participation in logistical preparations and support work for the 1963 Peruvian guerrilla movement and for the 1963-64 guerrilla front headed by Jorge Ricardo Masetti in northern Argentina, both of which were defeated.

"In both Argentina and Peru," he said, Saldaña "did not hesitate to put himself under orders of the very small group of Cuban *compañeros* who had gone to Bolivia in 1963 to organize and help prepare these insurrectionary movements."

The purpose of Masetti's guerrilla nucleus, Carretero noted, was to help pave the way "for the possibility of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara going to fight on his native Argentine soil, which had been his dream and historic commitment even before the beginning of the struggle in Cuba." He recalled that Fidel Castro had pledged to Guevara from the beginning that, after the victory of the Cuban revolution, Che

Continued on page 14



D.C., October, 1999. "Immigration," says and increasingly affects the knowledge and the United States. It has strengthened the perspectives and fertilizing its legacy with new

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Making History

Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces



On April 19, 1961, Cuba's revolutionary militias and fledgling armed forces crushed an invasion of U.S.-organized mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs. Their triumph, in less than 72 hours of combat, resounded throughout the world. It dashed Washington's hopes for a quick or easy overturn of the first socialist revolution in the Americas.



The men and women of Cuba who fought and won at Playa Giron were ordinary working people. Most were still in their teens or early twenties. Who they were, where they came from, and the experiences that molded them are the subject of this book.

As the 40th anniversary of the first military defeat of U.S. imperialism in Latin America is commemorated, Cuban generals José Ramón Fernández, Enrique Carreras, Nestor López Cuba, and Harry Villegas—three of them commanders of the victorious forces at the Bay of Pigs—talk of that battle, the October 1962 "missile" crisis, and the other experiences that transformed them, from the Sierra Maestra mountains of Cuba to Nicaragua, Angola, and Vietnam.

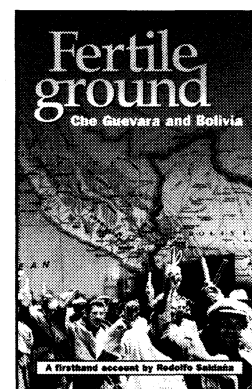
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Fertile Ground

CHE GUEVARA AND BOLIVIA

A firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña

Special offer \$8.00 (regular price \$9.95)



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

NFO farmers meet

Continued from front page
movement in 1955 into a producer-owned organization of farmers that today negotiates contracts and terms of sale for the products worth hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of its family-farmer members in 37 states.

In an interview with the *Militant*, Leonard Vandenburg, vice president of the NFO, said the group is talking to other farm organizations about "raising our common concerns with the government" when Congress begins discussing the 2002 farm bill.

In his address to the convention, Vandenburg said, "Low wages and big exports equal a lower standard of living, especially for wage earners and farmers," he said. "Wage earners and farmers in every country are being pitted against those in every other country."

"There is a hidden term they use—the new world order. Class is set against class," he said, "farmer against farmer, nation against nation. Something is wrong when more is spent on subsidies for agriculture than on paying dignified prices. Our goal is for farmers to be able to pay for their cost of production, plus a profit."

Many speakers at the conference raised the need for farmers to stand together to demand processing companies pay them more for their product.

There was a range of views expressed on trade questions. For example Corey Ollikka, president of the Canadian Farmers Union, said, "Canadian exports have gone up over the last 20 years as farm income is going lower." He explained that he had joined the protests last year in Seattle against the World Trade Organization. These actions were dominated by the AFL-CIO officialdom and other organizations who pushed reactionary proposals for the U.S. government to adopt stronger protectionist trade measures and punitive restrictions on other nations to limit imports to the United States.

This point of view was also reflected in a letter read by NFO president Olson to the convention from Teamsters president James Hoffa. "The Teamsters share a number of your concerns," the letter read, such as "fighting free trade, NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement], and relations with China."

Bernard Brommer, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, addressed the convention, supporting the farm organization's goals. He said, "For both the AFL and NFO a long-standing goal has been organizing and collective bargaining." The convention coincided with the inauguration of U.S. president George Bush, and Brommer spoke out against the "crude intimidation of African Americans and the invalidation of ballots of Blacks and the elderly" during the election. "From now on we need to make sure voting rights are respected and that Bush is only a one-term president."

"Labor has a lot in common with farmers and the system we have to deal with," said Keith Deitrich, a Nebraska corn and soybean producer and president of the American Corn Growers Association. "Farmers must band together collectively for a fair price in the market place." Deitrich also pointed to the two-year-old strike by members of the United Steelworkers of America against Titan Tire. The company "has 90 percent of the agricultural wheel market," he said. Union members "asked us to talk about this and to consider not buying Titan Tires until they resolve this conflict."

Arlen Hanson, a hog farmer from Brown County, South Dakota, explained in an interview how his family lost most of its land to a bank. In 1988, the bank first divided up his family's land into thirds and then negotiated with each of the brothers separately. "We had good land, we fertilized it and had good yields. We were efficient," Hanson

explained. "One brother lost it all. He had 300 head of cattle, but they forced him to pay off his debts. When the bank calls the note, you have to sell at whatever price you can get. He sold cows for \$500 a piece that were worth \$1,000."

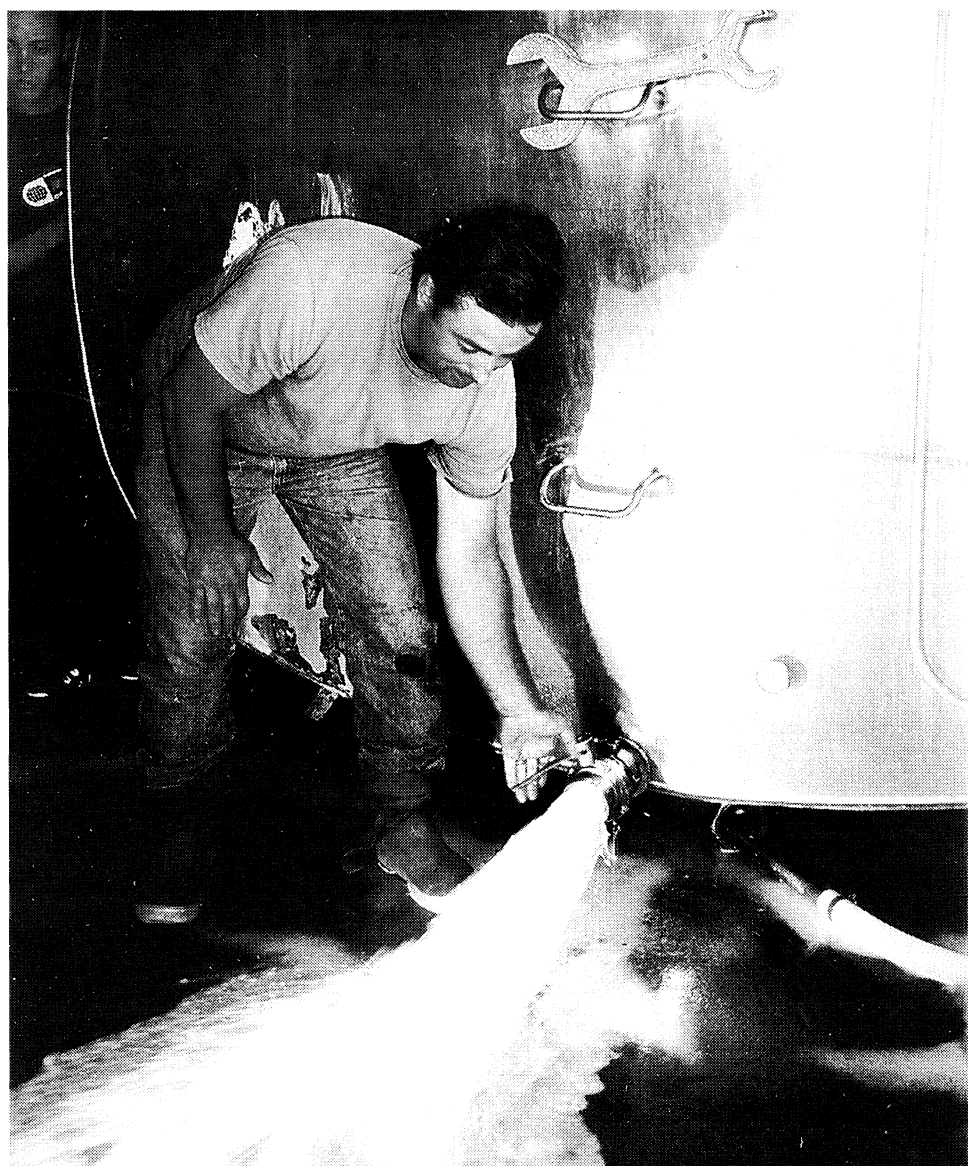
Leland Townsend, a livestock and grain farmer from Ingham County, Michigan, who participated in the national milk strike by dairy farmers last year, was at the convention. Locally, "fifty farmers participated in the action in which 12 individuals dumped 6,000 gallons of milk," he said. "Some of the milk was donated to a Michigan food bank, which picked it up and distributed it."

An individual NFO member who works at the Crooked Creek Dairy processed the milk for them. He also explained that the only sugar beet processor in the state of Michigan has filed bankruptcy and sugar beets are piling up. Truck drivers who haul sugar beets from the storage area to the processor had not been paid for two weeks.

Mark Rohr, a dairy farmer from Bluffton, Minnesota, began dumping milk to protest the low prices to farmers in April 1999. "I dumped milk in 1999 in front of the State Capitol building in St. Paul," he said. "The media and TV covered it. Dozens of people called and commented on it. It got a discussion going." Rohr said he also dumped milk on his farm as part of the national milk strikes last July and September. "The prices we get won't pay expenses," said Rohr.

The NFO convention next year will be in Springfield, Missouri.

Deborah Liatos is a meat packer and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120. Leslie Dork contributed to this article.



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy
California dairy farmer Javier Avila dumps milk during Labor Day, 2000, protest. At NFO convention farmers discussed how to confront deteriorating economic conditions.

Volunteers win Pathfinder orders in Canada

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TORONTO—Press Distribution in Canada received orders in January for \$1,410 worth of books and pamphlets. Fifty-eight percent of these came from commercial outlets other than Pathfinder bookstores, promising a solid increase in sales over 2000. In the first six weeks of this year, 118 books were shipped out to 14 trade stores.

Efforts by Pathfinder supporters in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal to begin systematic sales work are responsible for this trend.

In February, a Montreal university bookstore placed an order for 15 books in French following the visit of a volunteer salesperson. In addition, a university bookstore in Trois Rivières, Quebec, recently ordered a total of seven copies of the French-language edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes.

Stores in Toronto have opened six new accounts with Pathfinder since December. One, specializing in African and Afro-American books, ordered 12 titles, including some on the Cuban revolution.

Using as a reference tool, *The Book Trade in Canada*, Toronto volunteers selected 20 stores in the area, some of which they had never visited before. Each were sent a Black History Month Quick Order fax form, with a listing of books and prices that buyers could check off and send to the distribution center. The list presented everything from titles by Malcolm X to *Capitalism's World Disorder* and *The Truth About Yugoslavia*.

As volunteers phoned to check that the fax had been received they were often able to set up appointments to see the buyers and show them the books and catalogues in person.

"Oh, this is perfect," exclaimed the buyer of one of Toronto's major independent bookstores, as she saw the books in the sales rep's briefcase gleaming out at her. She went through all the books in the case as well as the catalogue, ordering *Art and Revolution*, *What Is Surrealism?* and 11 others, saying that titles on Cuba sell well.

Although the store stocked the Pimlico edition of Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary*, she also took a copy of Pathfinder's. In making this sale the Pathfinder supporter found it useful to show the buyer a photocopy of a *Times Literary Supplement* review pointing out the advantages of Pathfinder's annotation, introduction, and other aspects of the book that make it more accessible to today's reader.

In response to the interest generated by

a recent PBS television series on the history of jazz, many bookstores have organized book displays on this subject. Seeing this, Pathfinder supporters in Toronto sent a Quick Order form for Pathfinder's two jazz titles to a number of music stores. On the strength of this and a few phone conversations, a major music bookstore in town ordered two copies each of *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s* and *Black Music, White Business*.

Plans are now underway for some telemarketing to the east coast Maritime provinces. Across the country, volunteers are fig-

uring out how to specially promote Pathfinder's newest titles on Cuban and Latin American revolutionary struggles, including *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*; *Making History*, and the Spanish edition, *Haciendo historia*; and *The Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*. In addition to other bookstores, there is likely to be interest by owners of stores that cater to the tens of thousands of Spanish-speaking workers in the city.

Katy LeRougetel is a member United Steelworkers of America Local 5338.

Homelessness on rise in New York City

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Every night more than 25,000 New York City residents stay in shelters for homeless people, up 10 percent from last year, in spite of more stringent screening procedures initiated by the city administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 1996. The level of homelessness in the city has risen to a level unequaled since the 1980s, leading to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in city shelters.

A growing number of families, especially women with children, make up the ranks of those seeking housing in homeless shelters. On an average night 10,177 children and their 8,024 adult family members stay at homeless shelters. Seventy-eight percent of shelter residents are families or single women. Of these, some 500 families who have qualified for shelter because they are seeking refuge from domestic violence have to sign up for housing each night at the Emergency Assistance Unit in the Bronx because they have been given housing for only one day at a time.

National increase

According to Martin Oesterreich, the city commissioner for homeless services, the increase is happening across the United States. A 25-city survey showed a 17 percent increase in homeless applicants for assistance.

One development contributing to the number of people with no homes is the rising cost of apartments in the city. Steven Banks, counsel to the Coalition for the Homeless and the Homeless Rights Project of the Legal Aid Society, told the *New York Times*, "What we're seeing now is that work isn't enough to keep people out of the shelter system. The \$5.15 per hour minimum

wage is not enough to cover rents greater than \$700 or \$800 a month."

'Affordability gap'

A 1996 New York City study on housing showed that the median contract rent of housing units not regulated by the city's rent control laws was \$690. The study found that 25.6 of those renting unregulated apartments and 29.1 percent of those in rent stabilized households paid more than half their income for rent and utilities, something the report's authors cynically called an "affordability gap." "The city report listed 30 percent of income as the "affordability standard."

As a result of this gap, more working people are falling behind in the rent and getting evicted. Landlords were successful in obtaining 122,000 eviction warrants in New York City in 2000, up from 114,000 in 1999.

During January, according to state court documents, the Emergency Assistance Unit in the Bronx was overcrowded on a daily basis, with more than 700 people staying there each night. Up to 32 families were relegated to sleeping on the floor at the facility. In addition, the court found that there was no cleaning staff, which "makes it an extremely unhealthy place for a particularly vulnerable population."

Garbage on the floor

The *Times* reported that when journalists arrived to interview residents of the shelter, guards ordered them not to speak to them. One woman went around the corner to a pay phone and called a reporter to say, "This place is horrible. There's garbage on the floor. They've been busing us at night to a place in the Bronx where they do a full body search, even on the children."

New International no. 4

- The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States by Jack Barnes
- The Crisis Facing Working Farmers by Doug Jenness
- Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba, two speeches by Fidel Castro

\$9.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Ontario miners host solidarity weekend

BY ANNETTE KOURI

SUDBURY, Ontario—Striking nickel miners marked the sixth month of their fight against Falconbridge Ltd. by hosting a solidarity weekend here to show their determination to last “one day longer” than the bosses.

The miners, members of Mine Mill/Canadian Auto Workers Local 598, mobilized hundreds of strikers and their supporters at a rally, Sunday, January 28. Speakers included Basil Hargrove, president of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). “I salute the courage of the Mine Mill [strikers] in taking on this incredible struggle with this vicious employer,” he said, adding that the company is trying to break the union.

The success of the weekend showed the breadth of solidarity for the strike by people in the mining community of Sudbury. Miners organized a reception at the old Mine Mill Hall Friday evening where out-of-town guests such as this reporter were welcomed and helped with housing arrangements. Saturday began with a pancake and sausage breakfast followed by a mass picket in front of the entrance to four mines on the west side of Sudbury. That evening there was a delicious supper followed by speakers, music, and dancing. Sunday featured a car caravan to the community center in Falconbridge, located on the east side of Sudbury, where the rally took place, followed by mass picketing in front of the smelter.

Dave Chisholm, a striker from the Fraser



Striking nickel miners and supporters rally in Sudbury, marking six months on strike against Falconbridge Ltd. Workers are resisting company's concession demands.

mine, participated in the Sunday morning rally. He said in an interview, “As far as I'm concerned, the union is getting stronger.” When the company started its assault, he stated, “They wanted to break the union. But they're finding out the union is stronger than they thought. We're fighting for everyone. If

the company wins, it'll have a snowball effect—not just here, but all over the country.”

There are more than 1,200 workers on strike here against Falconbridge, which produces about 4 percent of the world's nickel. The strike began August 1 when the company demanded major concessions from the

union, including ending seniority rights, reducing union representatives on the job in areas such as health and safety, and contracting out work.

Through the use of scab labor and management personnel the company has been able to keep some of the mines and the smelter operating at 60 percent, according to Falconbridge. Strikers say the company is only producing at about 30 percent capacity.

Although company officials claim the strike is not hurting their operations, they were recently forced to release figures showing that fourth-quarter profits were significantly lower because of the walkout. They have also announced layoffs at their refinery in Norway, claiming a shortage of materials. The refinery is one of the world's largest and employs more than 500 people, members of Norwegian Union of Chemical Industry Workers Local 40.

The big-business press focused on incidents over the weekend that involved some damage to company property and confrontations with the police. However, the degree of discipline exercised by the union members was shown by the fact that there were no arrests despite a police mobilization, including 250 extra cops from Ontario province brought in for the weekend. The police were dressed in full riot gear for the action at the smelter January 28.

Many workers from across Ontario came to show their support. Twenty-two arrived on Saturday from York University in Toronto, many of whom are graduate students, members of Local 3903 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), who had recently won their strike for higher pay and better working conditions against York University. Joseph Tohill from CUPE Local 3903 was warmly applauded by the crowd gathered for supper at the old Mine Mill union hall when he explained that their union would like to sponsor a benefit in Toronto for the striking mine workers in order to get the strike better known “down south.” Sudbury is 400 kilometers north of Toronto.

There was a group of 15 members of CAW Local 27 who had traveled eight hours to take part in the rally. One of them told the local press that the support of out-of-towners shows, “how far the Falconbridge family extends.”

Annette Kouri is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers at Quality Meats in Toronto.

Oakland marchers defend immigrant rights

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

OAKLAND, California—“I support equal rights for all immigrants in this country. It's a struggle to survive. Without papers you can't exist in this country,” said Lillieth, a garment worker from San Francisco, at a march and rally here January 27 of more than 3,000 people for amnesty and immigrant rights. The action was supported by a broad array of organizations.

The spirited and confident crowd was mostly working class and predominantly Latino. A significant number of Asians participated as well. As they marched through working-class neighborhoods, passersby, residents, and people in cars waved in support. Many signs and the speeches at the march were in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

The action was sponsored by the Labor Immigrant Organizing Network (LION) and endorsed by the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, Chinese for Affirmative Action, California Labor Federation, the Central Labor Councils of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, Filipinos for Affirmative Action, Health Care Workers Local 250, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 2850, HERE Local 2, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 7, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, St. Elizabeth Church, San Francisco Labor Council, San Mateo County Central Labor Council, SEIU Local 1877, United Auto Workers, United Farm Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 428, and Office of Public Policy and Social Concerns—Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Some of the chants during the march included, “Sin papeles, no hay paz” (No papers, no peace) and “Aquí estamos y no nos vamos” (Here we are and we're not going). Signs included, “Legalization para todos” (Legalization for all) by the Justice for Janitors campaign of SEIU Local 1877 and “Justice for immigrant workers. Amnesty now” in English, Spanish, and Chinese by LION of the Central Labor Council of Alameda County.

“Everyone needs papers,” said Maria Imelda Gomez. “Without papers, you can't work. It's not right that only people who have papers can earn a good wage. My husband works in a restaurant in San Francisco for \$6.25 an hour. We have three young children and I don't work. Five of us live in a studio apartment where we pay \$435 per month plus more for bills. Now my husband only has one job.”

Martin Barrientos came to the demonstration on one of three buses organized by UFCW Local 428 in San Jose. He works in a nonunion automobile transmission shop. “I make \$14 an hour as a mechanic. Others

make \$20 an hour. They don't pay you as much when you're an immigrant and don't speak English. It's important that people are uniting more.”

Torm Nompraseurt attended the action with a few others from the Laotian Organizing Project of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network. “About 10,000 Laotians live in West Contra Costa County,” he said. “Living near chemical and oil companies affects everyone there especially lower income and people of color. MBA, a plastics company, had a fire and didn't warn any of the residents until the next day. Last year we fought for the emergency warning system to be in different languages. Many in our community don't have English skills. Most work for minimum wage, and work

two jobs plus overtime. The bosses treat you badly, ask you to do things that are unsafe, and they harass you.”

Twelve students came from the Santa Clara University chapter of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlan (MEChA). Alejandra Lizardo, 18, heard about the demonstration in her parish. “I think people that come here and work have the right and privilege to become citizens,” Lizardo said. “We're very inspired by the demonstration. We didn't know it would be this big. I think our MEChA chapter should become more political.”

Deborah Liatos is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120.

Boston vigil protests cop killing of Black man

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—“Remember Ricky” and “What do we want? Justice!” were some of the chants by 100 participants at a vigil for Ricky Bodden here February 3. Bodden, a 29-year-old Black man, was fatally shot in the back of the neck by a Boston cop December 27.

The protest, held at the Quincy-Stanley Playground where Bodden was killed, was organized by the “Call For Justice” coalition of family members, friends, and activists.

Signs at the protest demanded, “Stop Police Brutality” and “Murder is Murder. Put the police on trial.” Other signs said, “Bad cops are not rotten apples, the system is a rotten tree” and asked, “Who is protecting us from you?”

The coalition is demanding the police apologize to Ricky Bodden's family, that the officer who shot Bodden be prosecuted, and a civilian review board be established. Dana Gallop, a nephew of Ricky Bodden, explained at the vigil that it was important that we “come together in unity to stop this from happening.” He also encouraged participants to sign a petition demanding Ricky be painted into the Quincy Street mural near the park.

Deven Gallop, a high school student and nephew of Bodden, explained how the vigil was built. “I passed out flyers at my high school. Other students were interested and said I'll see you there.”

Flyers were also distributed in the neighborhood of the shooting and at nearby bus and subway stops. Gallop commented on the fact that his uncle was shot in the back of the neck, “If a person is running away from you, you're not in danger.”

According to the police, Officer Kyle Wilcox saw Bodden and a friend, June Gonzalez, in the park. He suspected they had marijuana. When he approached them

he discovered it was a cigarette. Wilcox demanded they submit to a search. The two refused and started running. In mid-flight, according to Wilcox, Bodden pulled a gun out of his jacket pocket and pointed it at him. A .45-caliber handgun was found near Bodden's body.

Gonzalez, who was trailing close behind Bodden, said he never saw a gun. He only saw it, he explained to the *Boston Globe*, when Wilcox recovered the gun and showed it to him.

Speaking from their lawyer's office last month, Carol Bodden, Ricky's sister, explained, “I don't see how he could have done what the cops say he did. If he was turning to shoot at the officer, why was he shot in the back of the neck?”

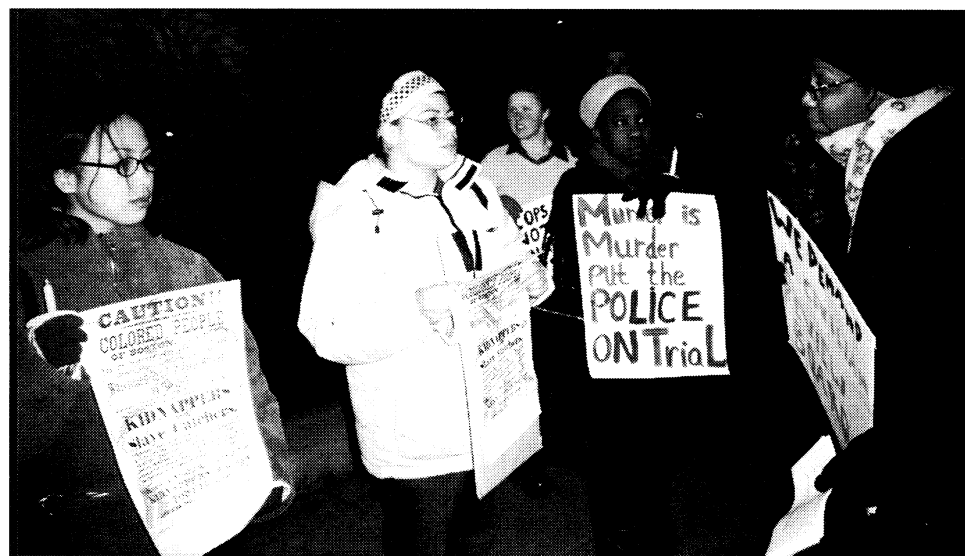
Stephen Hrones, the attorney for the family, said that when the marijuana joint

Wilcox thought he saw turned out to be a cigarette, he lacked grounds for detaining or searching Bodden or Gonzalez, and both men were within their legal rights to walk, or run away.

“To get justice you must demand it,” Terry Marshall, a leader of the coalition and of a local anti-police brutality organization, told the rally. Adding, “You get justice when people come out in the streets.” Another speaker pointed out that it was the anniversary of the police shooting of Amadou Diallo. In New York, on Feb. 4, 1999, police fired 41 bullets at Diallo, killing him in the doorway of his apartment building.

A flyer at the vigil was distributed inviting people to the next Call For Justice meeting.

Ted Leonard is a meat packer in Boston.



Participants in February 3 vigil protested killing of Ricky Bodden by Boston cops

Militant/Sarah Ullman

Mass protests push back austerity moves

Continued from front page

to release indigenous leaders and protesters arrested during the mobilization, pledged to aid migrant workers within the country and those who emigrate to other countries, and to not "accept regionalization of Plan Colombia," Washington's military buildup across from Ecuador's border.

The measures were among the conditions worked out between Noboa's administration and U.S. and other finance capitalists acting under the umbrella of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF said Noboa had to deliver on the austerity measures in order to secure a new \$2 billion package of loans.

"This is a triumph," said Luis Chango, a 19-year-old indigenous from Cotopaxi, 60 miles from Quito. "It shows that we are strong and can defend our rights."

Some 4,000 indigenous people staying at the Salesiana Polytechnic University near downtown Quito celebrated the victory with dance and music played with traditional instruments. The university had become an organizing center base for the protests, with support from the students. As the indigenous leaders arrived, they marched through the streets waving flags of the indigenous peoples and Ecuador, chanting "Long live Ecuador, long live the indigenous peoples," and in Quichua, "Shuc Shungulla," ("We are one heart"). Students also joined the march. On February 13 the government lifted the state of emergency it had imposed February 2.

The Ecuadoran daily *El Universo* interviewed Maria Mercedes Vega, a 20-year-old farmer from Rumichaca, a rural town of 1,200 west of Cotopaxi, who came to Quito with her husband and two small children for more than two weeks to "support the uprising." Mercedes said she and her husband only make \$30 a month when prices are good. For this reason her husband works loading trucks to supplement their income between harvests.

The uprising against the devastating impact of the price increases came after more than a year of government attacks and working-class and indigenous resistance. Last January, workers and peasants marched on Quito, Guayaquil—the main port city—and other towns in response to plans announced by then President Jamil Mahuad to make the U.S. dollar the Ecuador's official currency, to impose austerity, and to allow the U.S. military to set up a base in the country. The actions forced Mahuad to resign.

A short-lived three-person junta came to power, composed of CONAIE president Vargas; Carlos Mendoza, an army colonel involved in the uprising; and former supreme court president Carlos Solórzano. The U.S. State Department then muscled in and pressed the military to dissolve the junta and put vice president Noboa in the presidency.

Since the dollarization plan became law in March 2000, the number of people living below the poverty level has increased from 70 percent to 79 percent. The statutory minimum wage in Ecuador is \$132 a month, but few indigenous people earn even half this amount. The *Financial Times*, reporting that Noboa's first year "has brought stability," tamed inflation, and boosted oil exports, added, "But the rural poor have seen little benefit and suffered from price increases on basic commodities."

The United States is Ecuador's biggest trading partner, purchasing 39 percent of the country's exports and selling it nearly one third of its imports. U.S.-based Occidental Petroleum Corp. is leading a consortium that plans to invest \$1.1 billion to build a pipeline and extract oil from the Ecuadoran Amazon. And Washington is expanding its military base in the port city of Manta to the tune of \$62 million this year for airport improvements and housing.

This is the backdrop for the powerful response to the Noboa government's December move to substantially raise prices.

Leaders of CONAIE and other organizations of indigenous people began organizing what grew into sizable and militant actions. They joined coalitions of students and workers in nationally coordinated protests January 21-22 and set up roadblocks throughout the country. Vargas, along with other leaders, was arrested January 29 on charges of "subversion," but was subsequently released.

The state of emergency, imposed February 2 by Noboa, allowed the government to search homes, limit public meetings and nationwide travel, and deploy the army and the police as it saw necessary.

The government's failure to repress the protests did not go unnoticed. The Quito daily *El Universo* commented February 8 that "analysts consider that the government underestimated the uprising." So did the Ecuadoran capitalists, it would seem. In the same issue, which published the accord and contained photos of triumphant workers and farmers taking down their barricades, there was a half-page declaration signed by leaders of industry and the chamber of commerce titled "Chaos cannot continue." The



Indigenous people and students march February 7 in Quito.

business leaders denounced the protesters' disrespect for "law and order," accused "outside elements" of infiltrating the indigenous movement, and praised the army and police for their "patriotic work."

Within a few days of the accords, however, government officials were trying to take back what they had conceded.

On February 9, Rodolfo Barniol, president of the state-run oil company

Petroecuador, announced that within four to six weeks only the poorest 30 percent of the population would be eligible to buy cooking gas at \$1.60, and "the rest of the populace will go back to paying the \$2 per tank price that's been in place since December." The central bank of Ecuador claims that each canister costs \$5 and that it aims to lower the subsidy the government spends each year.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

FLORIDA

Miami

Defend Haiti's Sovereignty—Behind U.S. Imperialism's Attempts to Undermine the Aristide Election. Panel discussion. Sat., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 4582 NE 2nd Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 573-3355.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Malcolm X: Revolutionary and Internationalist: His Meaning for Today. Speaker: leader of Chicago Young Socialists. Fri., Feb. 23, 7:00 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd floor. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

The Revolutionary Legacy of Malcolm X: An Internationalist Fighter of the Working Class. Fri., Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m. **Washington is the Real Terrorist: What's Behind the So-Called "Anti-Terror" Campaign?**

Fri., Feb. 23, 7:30 p.m.

Slowdown in the U.S. Economy: Why Working People Should Demand Jobs for All. Fri., March 2, 7:30 p.m. All forums at 1068 Fulton St., 3rd floor. Tel: (718) 398-7850.

OHIO

Cleveland

The Crisis Facing Working Farmers Today: Report from the Ohio Farmers Union Convention. Speaker: representative of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. 7535 Broadway. Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 641-9405.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Political Polarization: What the State Elections in Western Australia and Queensland Reveal. Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League and member of Maritime Union of Australia. Fri., March 2, 7:00 p.m. 176 Redfern St., 1st floor. Donation: \$4. Tel (02) 9690 1533.

Aventis to buy StarLink corn from farmers

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Aventis CropScience USA LP, a division of France's Aventis SA, agreed to purchase all StarLink genetically modified corn from farmers in 17 states.

Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration only approved the StarLink strain for animal feed and industrial use, farmers say Aventis and Starlink distributors failed to notify them of all precautions necessary to prevent cross fertilization or mixing with other varieties grown for human consumption.

Aventis has pledged to pay 25 cents per bushel to farmers for the banned corn, and five to 10 cents per bushel for non-StarLink corn that has been mixed in with Starlink. This is well below the \$2.00 a bushel price farmers currently receive for corn.

Affected farmers have initiated two class-action lawsuits against Aventis for damages incurred. The settlement is estimated to cost Aventis at least \$100 million, and possibly much more.

The ban on StarLink contaminated food products has proved difficult to enforce. As recently as January 18 the Japanese government reported finding contamination in food shipments that supposedly had been inspected in the United States. Aventis fired three top officials, including the president of its U.S. division, in wake of the StarLink debacle.

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

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GEORGIA: Atlanta: 465 Boulevard, Suite 214. Zip: 30312. Tel: (404) 622-8917. E-mail: atlpathfinder@cs.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1212 N. Ashland Suite 201. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. E-mail: 104077.511@compuserve.com

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MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: P.O. Box 441580 Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 875-0100. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 1569 Sherburne Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 644-

6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 506 Springfield Ave. 3rd floor. Zip: 07103. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: swpnewark@usa.net

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879,

Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533.

E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993. E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: 104614.2606@compuserve.com

Toronto: 2761 Dundas St., Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705. E-mail: milpathtoronto@cs.com

Vancouver: #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@cs.com

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstig 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milpth@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

Coltrane lives!—As a veteran jazz fan we're ready to book passage to the Italian Riviera. According to press reports, ex-prez



Harry Ring

Clinton, a noted sax artist, has been offered \$250,000 to do a gig there.

Despite good examples—According to *USA Today*, the country's "wealthiest parents" complain that most of their children among other things, place underemphasis on

material possessions and spend beyond their means. We're skeptical on one point: Can the children of the truly richest families, even if they want to, spend beyond their means?

Dad's last \$?—Benson and Francie Ford just paid \$5 million for two adjacent Southern California beach properties. The house on one and motel on the other will be razed and replaced by a single home. It will include a 30' x 60' master bedroom suite, a library-movie theater, and an all-glass stairwell. The parking area will accommodate 11 cars, including several of their own. Their main home is in Detroit and they have crash pads in Key Largo and Dallas. Benson is a great-grandson of Henry Ford I.

Company's gotta make a dollar—California's Dept. of Motor Vehicles charged the state's largest Chevrolet dealer with selling rental cars as new, tampering with odometers, misrepresenting finance terms, etc. They said fraud was involved in the sale of some 1,500 cars. The company assured that two "rogue" salesmen had been confronted with their misdeeds and resigned.

Local Blacks skip the highway?—Recent tabulations confirm a widespread racist "profiling" of Black drivers by cops issuing traffic tickets. In Texas, officials conceded state troopers did pull over a disproportionate number of non-whites, but said these were mostly from other areas.

Talk about sick—A claimed 3,100 present and former nuclear workers were slated to gather at the Nevada test site for a Family Day celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first test explosion.

Children under 10 were not allowed to come because, we presume, they might crawl under the fences into the zone of death.

Praise the lord and swing that pick—In England, Catholic bishops have embarked on a campaign to persuade people that manual labor can be an antidote to self-indulgence, dishonesty, and individualism.

They hasten to add, however, that such sweat doesn't guarantee salvation, but it can help. And, the good fathers soberly warn, hard

work "is a prime way of creating wealth, and so presents the risk of serving only to fill the human horizon with a lust for wealth and possessions."

Didn't work hard enough?—"Half of elderly patients suffering malnutrition"—headline, *The Times*, London.

Cast and audience declare solidarity?—Last we heard, backstage workers at London's Royal Shakespeare Company were preparing to shut down Peter Hall's 12-hour production of *Tantalus*, an epic on the Trojan war.

Electricians, carpenters, sound and lighting engineering, objected to working shifts as long as 24 hours.

SWP 1961 statement: 'Stop crimes against Cuba!'

Printed below is a statement issued by the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee on April 19, 1961, entitled "Stop the Crime Against Cuba!" The statement is included in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* by Joseph Hansen. At the time Washington had just launched its mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, which Cuban forces subsequently defeated within 72 hours. Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

The Kennedy administration has launched an undeclared war on Cuba. This is the brutal fact now facing the American people.

No less an authority than the *New York Times* felt forced to admit in an editorial April 18, the day after the invasion: "It is also no secret that the United States Government has been helping the Cuban exiles over a period of many months with arms, training and facilities on American soil and in Guatemala. This has been too well publicized to be ignored today."

Khrushchev has appealed personally to Kennedy "to put an end to the aggression." The Soviet premier warned that "any so-called 'small war' can provoke a chain reaction in all parts of the world." He reaffirmed a pledge to help Cuba "in beating back the armed attack." Once again he

the type of mentality now on display in the Eichmann trial. Is this the "New Frontier"?

Like Eisenhower, Kennedy is acting for the economic and financial interests that stand behind the Democratic and Republican parties. These dealers in stocks and bonds bled Cuba for six decades, condemning the population to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and endemic disease. They want back their lucrative holdings—no ifs, ands, or buts. Besides that, they fear the Cuban example will inspire similar revolutions throughout Latin America. Their recipe is "Crush it in the bud."

The counterrevolutionary generals of the invasion army lie when they say they are fighting for "democracy" and the "liberation" of Cuba. Their sole aim is to make the island safe once again for the dollars of American investors.

This is proved by the key plank in their call for war against the Castro regime issued April 8 in Manhattan by Miró Cardona, head of the "Cuban Revolutionary Council" set up for recognition by the U.S. as the "government" of Cuba: "We emphatically assure those who have been unjustly dispossessed that all of their assets will be returned.... We shall encourage investment in private property, both national and foreign, and we shall give complete guarantees to private enterprise and to private property."

The Cuban revolutionists have followed an opposite course. In place of capitalist production for profit at the expense of human rights, they are building a planned economy.

In Cuba the long-standing army of unemployed has been greatly reduced and its liquidation is feasible in a year or two. Jim Crow was wiped out along with capitalism, its main supporting institution. Attractive, low-cost homes are being built by the thousands throughout the island in a great national effort to provide housing for everyone. Rents were slashed in half and now every tenant can become a home-owner, since rent is accepted by the government as installment payments on a house or apartment.

Landless peasants have received their own farms or else participate in cooperatives that have already made possible an impressive rise in national productivity. Illiteracy, which affected a third of the population in 1959, is now close to elimination, a two-year achievement no other country can match.

Wall Street views gains as mortal threat

These are some of the gains in Cuba which Wall Street regards as a mortal threat. The money-changers are right. Why should any people endure the domination of big monopolies when by kicking them out they can win such enormous improvements?

Wall Street's scheme is to correct things by overthrowing the government of Cuba the way the Central Intelligence Agency overthrew the lawfully elected government of Guatemala in 1954.

What is this mysterious CIA? What does it do with its enormous funds? To whom is it accountable?

All that the American people have been permitted to know is that the head of this spy agency is Allen Dulles and that it carries on "cloak and dagger" operations. Spying, it turns out, reaches the level of undeclared wars.

One courageous journalist, I.F. Stone, has asked why Allen Dulles is not indicted. A



Militant/Joseph Hansen

A 1960 march at the UN organized by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee protesting U.S. aggression against Cuba. Socialist Workers Party helped build and participate in activities in defense of the Cuban Revolution. SWP resolution explained that the Bay of Pigs "crime against Cuba is also a crime against the American people."

congressman alive to his responsibilities to the American people would go further and demand impeachment of Kennedy.

Many voices have demanded investigation of the CIA—investigation of its U-2 spy operations, its sinister efforts to get us into war in Laos, its recruitment of Cuban mercenaries, its training of saboteurs and terrorists, its construction of military training camps and secret air bases in other countries, its access to the arsenals of the navy, the army, and the air force to outfit an entire

expeditionary force and keep it supplied in a war.

The American people are entitled to know exactly how this agency assembles foreign troops on American soil, how it transfers these mercenaries to other countries, how it lands them on the beaches of Cuba and supplies them with the matériel of war; and who pays for all this.

The crimes committed by American big business against Cuba since 1898 make a

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BOOK OF THE WEEK

stressed the interest of his government "in a relaxation of international tension." "But," he added, "if others aggravate it we shall reply in full measure."

This restrained indication of the possible consequences must be taken with utmost seriousness. If the Kennedy administration persists in its armed aggression, it can set in motion forces that will inevitably plunge humanity into nuclear war.

Let there be no mistake about the guilt. The Central Intelligence Agency, first under Eisenhower and then under Kennedy, financed and trained thousands of counter-revolutionary mercenaries. They were armed with U.S. naval, air, and army weapons, including B-26 bombers and troop transports. Their invasion of Cuba was masterminded by American military experts in flagrant violation of the U.S. laws, including the Neutrality Act, and nonaggression treaties.

The crime against Cuba is also a crime against the American people. All Kennedy's talk about a "Peace Corps" and an "Alliance for Progress" in Latin America proved to be lying propaganda. It aimed at covering up the real plan of action—a new ordeal of terror and butchery for the Cuban people.

Kennedy's campaign promises about a "New Frontier" and world peace were directed primarily to the youth of America. But Kennedy is not teaching the ways of peace. The planting of phosphorous in the air-conditioning system of Havana's biggest department store is hailed as a heroic act. Corps of bombers are praised as champions of freedom and democracy. By this glorification of sabotage and indiscriminate terror, Kennedy is fostering in America's youth

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 27, 1976

Representatives of the Wounded Knee Survivors' Association told a Senate subcommittee recently that had the U.S. government had its way, there would have been no survivors of the 1890 massacre of Sioux Indians.

After the army's slaughter of defenseless men, women, and children, "the dead were left out there for days, the wounded were left out there to freeze to death," Rev. Simon Looking Elk told the committee.

A subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings February 5 and 6 to consider a bill that would provide \$3,000 compensation to each of the Wounded Knee survivors and their descendants. The Indian group views the payment as a "token," but also an important acknowledgment of government wrongs against the Indian people.

The army's response has been to deny that the killing of an estimated 90 braves and 200 women and children on December 29, 1890, was a massacre.

The army showed "great restraint and compassion," states its twenty-four-page report. And it would be "highly inequitable" to compensate Big Foot and many of his "belligerent followers" who were responsible for provoking the confrontation!

The parallel between the nineteenth century slaughter and present-day crimes such as Vietnam's My Lai is an obvious one.



February 26, 1951

The withdrawal of the three labor members from the Wage Stabilization Board on Feb. 16 has created a crisis in Truman's war mobilization plans and in the 18-year coalition between the labor leadership and the Democratic administration.

Resignation of the labor representatives was forced by the burning resentment of the workers. They resent Truman's vicious strikebreaking tactics against the railroad workers and the wage-freeze which the Big Business administration seeks to impose despite runaway prices.

The need for the labor bureaucracy to act was aptly described by columnist Doris Fleeson in the Feb. 19 *N.Y. Post*: "Labor's people aren't yessing their bosses but are pressing for solutions for the bread-and-butter problems of life. So long as inflation control remains ineffective, labor leaders have to fight—or lose their own jobs."

The wage-freeze order backed by the industry and "public" members of the WSB would peg wages to ten percent above the Jan. 1950 level.

This was described by the labor members of the board as "a series of penalties and restrictions—imposed at a time when prices are continuing their upward rise. The wage formula is inflexible, inequitable and unworkable."

Defend black lung benefits

The entire labor movement has a stake in supporting efforts by the coal miners to defend and extend black lung benefits. It is part of the fight for human dignity, the right to a safe workplace, and for the employers to be responsible for the damage they do to the bodies and lives of working people on the job.

The decision by a federal judge to put new regulations affecting black lung benefits on hold, the product of a vigorous campaign by the coal bosses, means that miners and widows who wish to file for black lung benefits cannot do so for several months at best. This attack has been joined by the new Bush administration.

The rule changes under dispute, implemented January 19 after a concerted effort over several years by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), are, as UMWA president Cecil Roberts said, a modest step forward. Along with the improvements, as the UMWA has noted, there are a number of problems with the changes proposed.

But the changes are a step in the right direction, and benefit all miners, union and nonunion. When black lung benefits first came into being, 70 percent of claims were successful. Congress amended the law in 1981 to make it much more difficult for miners to win benefits and gave assistance to companies fighting miners' claims. In the 20 years since then, those winning benefits have dropped below 10 percent. Miners find it hard to get legal help, because lawyers will only get paid if their claim is suc-

cessful, which can take more than a decade.

While campaigning for president in West Virginia, both George Bush and Albert Gore told miners they would protect black lung benefits. Now in office President Bush is acting in the interests of the wealthy mine owners.

While the Clinton administration gave lip service to concern for the black lung issue, it never sought to bring substantive changes in black lung benefits before Congress. Although a review of these regulations began in 1997, the final version was not promulgated until the last days of the Clinton administration in December last year. These regulations went into effect on January 19, Clinton's last day in office. Clinton took no action on other health and safety reforms that the UMWA has been pressing for, such as getting the Mine Safety and Health Administration to take over dust sampling from the companies.

All working people should solidarize with miners and retirees, such as those at a recent meeting in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, who said they were ready to march again like thousands did last May in Washington, D.C., in defense of the Coal Act.

The social movement that is growing among working and retired miners and their families and others in the coalfield communities from Pennsylvania and West Virginia to Utah and Colorado strengthens the fight for health care, safe working conditions, and dignity for the entire working class.

Trial turns victims into criminals

The federal trial in Manhattan of four men on charges of assisting bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa or planning a "conspiracy" to kill U.S. citizens who travel abroad has already resulted in blows being dealt to democratic rights. And because the "confessions" were made without the accused being given the right to have a lawyer present and under death threats by those interrogating them—threats the judge found believable—the trial is a frame-up from start to finish. It is the same kind of frame up that millions of working people face day in and day out at the hands of the U.S. "justice" system.

Through this trial Washington seeks to undermine Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, and disregard Miranda rights, which were won by working people decades ago. The actions by U.S. government officials also undermine Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination.

The interrogation of the men detained by FBI agents on foreign soil is part of government attempts to roll back protections codified in the 1966 Miranda decision, which require cops to inform anyone they detain of their right to remain silent and to consult an attorney. This hard-won right was a conquest of the titanic civil rights battles of the 1950s and 1960s.

Before the Miranda ruling, police were able to snatch Blacks and other workers off the streets and jail them for several days while they coerced a "voluntary" confession from them. This is exactly what happened to the four men on trial in New York who had few resources to defend themselves in a legal system already rigged against them.

The U.S. government hopes to turn the bombings to its own advantage. For decades, tens of millions of working people throughout Africa and the Mideast have organized, mobilized, and given their lives in struggle to end the wretched conditions forced upon them by the colonial and

imperialist powers. As working people resist the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis, the instability of the capitalist regimes beholden to imperialism increases. Through the trial, and media hype surrounding it, the U.S. rulers are working overtime to smear these struggles as those of mindless religious fanatics, individual terrorists, or ruthless men who will slaughter innocents on command.

Working people should reject this time-worn tactic. As Malcolm X pointed out in a speech one week before his assassination, "With skillful manipulating of the press, they're able to make the victim look like the criminal and the criminal look like the victim."

And this is how Washington hopes it can reinforce its imperial prerogative to arrest someone anywhere in the world and put him or her on trial in U.S. courts, and to carry out military assaults on, and maintain economic dominance over, semicolonial countries. It's important to remember the "justice" already meted out by Washington in response to the embassy bombings with the missile attacks on Afghanistan and the Sudan. After demolishing a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan under pretext that it was producing chemicals used for nerve gas, the U.S. government has still never officially admitted that criminal assault was unjustified. The *Militant* pointed out at the time that it is Washington, not workers and farmers throughout the region, who is the real terrorist.

The ruling class in Canada is also utilizing the prosecution and media smear campaign against the Sikh community around the Air India explosion to pursue similar inroads against democratic rights and to bolster its prerogatives to send military troops around the globe.

Workers and farmers worldwide can defend our rights and struggles by condemning these trials and frame-ups and rejecting the smear campaign generated by Washington. An injury to one is an injury to all!

Affordable housing is a right

The recent announcement by New York City officials that more than 25,000 people—the equivalent of a small town—stay in the city's shelters for the homeless every night is one more testimony to the bankruptcy of capitalism.

The city administrators' humiliating treatment of workers in the homeless shelters includes forcing 500 families seeking refuge from domestic violence to reapply for a bed to sleep on every day.

The fact that homeless shelter occupancy is up 10 percent over last year in New York—and is at similar or higher rates in other U.S. cities—underlines the increasing difficulty of making ends meet for a growing number of working people who live in cities and towns where a modest one-bedroom apartment can cost \$700, \$1,000, or even more.

The fact that the number of eviction warrants issued grew by 8,000 to 122,000 in New York City last year is a graphic reminder of the constant insecurity many people live with each month as the deadline approaches to put the rent check in the mail. For the 400,000 families in the city that pay more than half their income for rent, the housing question is a constant nightmare. The New York statistics show that many "single households with minor children;" most of them headed by women, paid 58 percent of their household income for rent in 1996—28 percent above what the city social engineers call "affordable."

On top of this, skyrocketing energy costs are forcing many workers and farmers to choose between staying

warm and paying for other necessities of life. Workers in the coal-mining communities around Sandusky, Alabama, set an example recently by coming out in force to a meeting to protest the steep price hikes and shutoffs being carried out by the local gas company.

The union movement needs to address these problems through opposition to attacks on the social wage, a fight for a union-scale minimum wage, and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay. Along with this goes the demand for nationalizing the energy companies to prevent price-gouging and shortages.

But the root problem that creates housing shortages, unaffordable rents, squalid housing run by price-gouging slumlords, and a growing number of homeless workers is the capitalist system itself. Rather than approaching housing as a right—that no family or person should ever have to wonder whether or not they will have an adequate roof over their head tomorrow—capitalism turns it into another way to appropriate the wealth created by working people for the tiny handful of multibillionaire ruling families. This happens regardless of the social cost or the lives and well-being of working people.

By taking the moral high ground in defense of workers who are feeling the brunt of the employers' offensive, the working class can advance the construction of a revolutionary proletarian movement that can put an end to the system run by billionaires who profit from the exploitation of the world's toilers.

Book launch

Continued from page 9

would be free to join the struggle to free Argentina from imperialist domination and that the Cuban leadership would aid him as much as its means allowed.

Carretero pointed to the role of Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, today an army corps general and Cuba's interior minister, as head of "the small group of compañeros who were there" to collaborate with the guerrilla groups in Argentina and Peru.

In this work, the Cuban revolutionary noted, Rodolfo Saldaña "was one of those who stood out the most," always coming up with "creative ideas to help carry out underground activities, no matter how complex or difficult they might seem."

A few years later, he added, Saldaña helped "create the necessary conditions for the arrival of Che and his fellow combatants in La Paz, Bolivia," to launch the Bolivian campaign.

Saldaña "was more than a Bolivian revolutionary," Carretero concluded. "He was a revolutionary of Latin America and the world, because he understood that the only way to put an end to the evils afflicting our America is to fight imperialism, fighting it on all fronts and at all times."

Faithful to his revolutionary convictions

Villegas described Saldaña as someone who "decided to subordinate his personal, individual interests, including his aspirations of becoming an engineer, to devoting himself to the life of a revolutionary, to political activity." From the time he was a young revolutionist, "he was in the front ranks of the struggle—on the barricades, in protest marches, marching alongside miners. He was a man who would not say 'Go!' but rather 'Let's go!'"

Villegas contrasted Saldaña's communist trajectory with the conduct of Mario Monje, who as general secretary of the Communist Party of Bolivia reneged on his initial commitment of support to the guerrilla front led by Guevara. In face of this treacherous course by the party's leadership, Saldaña, who joined ranks with Guevara, decided to leave the Communist Party. While not an easy decision for Saldaña after years of activity in the CP, he decided "he had to leave that party and maintain a consistently more honest, more revolutionary course to be faithful to principles," Villegas said.

Guevara assigned Saldaña "to head the organization of the urban apparatus" of the revolutionary front, Villegas explained. "For this, someone was needed who knew the people, who knew the workers, who had ties to them. And that man was Saldaña. So he was given this task." Saldaña carried out this assignment in exemplary fashion, Villegas said, despite his desire to join the guerrilla column.

Villegas pointed out that between 1969 and Saldaña's death last June, he lived and worked most of those years in Cuba. "He was a Cuban. He lived with us, shared our joys and sadness alike. He was outstanding in the daily work of our revolutionary people" such as regular defense activities. While hoping to return to his country some day, "he carried out his duty in this other trench, which is our country."

Villegas concluded, "We have in Saldaña a comrade, a revolutionary who fought to achieve, as Che said, the highest level attained by the human species, a communist."

When the meeting ended, many in the audience rushed over to the sales table to purchase copies of *Fertile Ground*, which was available in Cuban pesos. Twenty-seven copies were sold on the spot.

UK train drivers

Continued from page 16

Beatty checked the line and reported clear signs of corner gauge cracking, or wear along the top corner edge of the rail. They recommended to Railtrack, the company that owns the track and is responsible for its maintenance, that the track be replaced. The job was subcontracted to another maintenance firm, Jarvis, which delivered the track to the site in May. Balfour Beatty issued another warning in September but was told by Railtrack to "grind" the rails to prolong their life until the new track could be laid in November. The new track was still lying there when the crash took place in October. The train went off the tracks when the rails shattered into 300 pieces.

The Hatfield disaster took place a year after a fatal crash at Paddington, in west London, that killed 31 people—including both drivers—and injured 160, and led to the opening of a public inquiry. Before these crashes there was another in Southall, also in west London, in 1997, when seven people died and 151 were injured.

Sean Twomey, a solicitor for the families at Southall, said, "The rail companies' vested interests are preventing them from giving proper attention to safety. If their managers continue to ignore important aspects of safety there will be more disasters and more deaths on the railways."

The combined impact of the three crashes exposed a rail system in crisis. Since the Hatfield derailment there has been a change in the way workers view these so-called accidents. It has become unacceptable to blame rail workers, and "safety before profits" has become a popular slogan.

The joint RMT/ASLEF leaflet handed out during the Underground strike pointed to these concerns and the reason workers were taking action. The government moves to privatize the Underground would mean "proposals could be put in place," the union flyer said, "which tube staff believe will increase the chances of a Hatfield style disaster on the tube."

Coal miners defend black lung benefits

Continued from front page

Bush visits Charleston, West Virginia, February 14. In the presidential elections Bush campaigned vigorously in West Virginia and took the state from Democratic contender Albert Gore. During the campaign Republican ads attacked Gore's record on defending black lung benefits.

In joining forces with the coal bosses' legal action, newly-appointed labor secretary Elaine Chao argued that she needed time to review the rules in order to decide whether she was in agreement with the mining association's lawsuit aimed at overturning the new regulations.

In filing the legal challenge, the NMA said that the rules were "unnecessary" and "costly" and that they "ignore science [and] place miners' jobs in jeopardy." The association also claimed that the rules "will cause delays in the claims process, thus denying speedy award of benefits for deserving claimants."

A recent series in the *Roanoke Times* explained that for many miners seeking black lung benefits it takes years of struggle against the coal companies to overcome the obstacles put in their way. One article in the series quoted Mark Solomons, an attorney for the NMA, who, the paper wrote, claims that "black lung is largely a thing of the past. The problem today...is smoking." Solomons stated, "There is no need for the black lung program."

This contradicts the fact that active miners today are being diagnosed with black lung. At a hearing last year on coal dust in Morgantown, West Virginia, a miner from Consol's Blacksville mine reported that in the previous 10 months, 26 miners there had been diagnosed with black lung. And coal bosses continue to cheat on dust control. Since 1991, more than 160 mining companies or individuals have been criminally prosecuted for fraudulent coal-dust sampling practices.

At the Uniontown meeting, miners heard presentations from UMW president Roberts, a Labor Department spokeswoman, and UMW general counsel Grant Crandell. Lewis Fitch, national president of the Black

Lung Association, was also present at the podium. The meeting also became a speakout on the obstacles miners face in their fight for black lung benefits, as miners and family members voiced their opinions and asked questions of the panel.

Roberts said that fighting to get these benefits "is the worst nightmare you ever went through in your life. There is nothing more cruel than the blood gas test; miners end up passing out on treadmills. Miners should have been treated with more dignity."

Miners spoke about the medical examinations that they are forced to undergo to pursue their claim. These include tests of pulmonary function and arterial blood. Even under the revised regulations, a miner may have to undergo five of these exams, which can last up to six hours.

Retired miner George Burdar said, "We're not dogs, we're human beings. When you go to an exam, they treat you like a dog. And the judges don't care about miners any more than a man in the moon." Ernest Decker said, "During my hearing for black lung benefits, the judge actually said that mines are dust-free today."

Another retiree, John Gargus, told the meeting, "This must be the most difficult



Militant/Salm Kolis

Retired coal miners in Pennsylvania. Miners are fighting moves by Bush administration and coal bosses to scuttle new regulations that aid claims for black lung benefits.

condition in the world to diagnose. It's a shame, an embarrassment, a disgust to working people. What would it be if you went to a hospital with a problem and it took this long to diagnose?" Later, Gargus said in an interview, "We'll have to march on Washington. We'll show them we can't be swept under the carpet like dust. The miners have always had to fight, from the early days and in the struggle to form the union."

A retiree from the Emerald mine, Martin

Willis, agreed. "Bush is hardly unpacked in the White House and already he's attacking black lung benefits. I'm ready to march again. I was there in May, and I'm ready to go again," he said, referring to a march of 8,000 last year in Washington organized by the UMW.

Tony Lane is a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248 in southwestern Pennsylvania.

14-year-old in Florida could get life in prison

BY MIKE ITALIE

MIAMI—Fourteen-year-old Lionel Tate faces the prospect of life in prison without parole. Convicted on January 25 of first-degree murder, Tate will be sentenced March 2 by Broward County Judge Joel Lazarus. Under Florida's mandatory sentencing laws, judges must sentence those convicted of first-degree murder to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Tate, an African-American, was 12 when he killed six-year-old playmate Tiffany Eunick in July 1999 in Pembroke Pine, Florida, north of Miami.

Tate's family is calling on Judge Lazarus to amend the jury's verdict and rule instead on manslaughter or second-degree murder

charges, which allows for a lesser sentence.

Opposition to a life sentence for Lionel Tate is so strong that even Broward County prosecutor Ken Padowitz has stated he had told the defense from the beginning of the trial that if a life sentence is imposed, he will recommend to Gov. John Bush that he grant clemency and reduce the sentence. Padowitz has not said exactly what sentence he would recommend, and Bush has refused to say how he would respond if the case is presented to him.

It was the county prosecutor's decision to place the case of Lionel Tate in criminal court. Since 1992, 47 states have expanded their laws to punish juveniles as adults, not only for murder but also for drug crimes, weapons possession, and burglary.

Under the many "automatic transfer" and "mandatory waiver" laws that have been passed, any juvenile who commits a specified offense is automatically an adult. Some states have adopted "direct file" transfers, in which the prosecutor has the discretion to charge certain cases in either juvenile or criminal court. Prosecutors use this method frequently in Florida, where the number of transfers out of juvenile court reached 7,000 in 1995, almost as many as the 9,000 cases placed in criminal court by judges nationwide.

In addition, Black youth in the United States are six times more likely to be put in prison than whites. An April 2000 report

released by the Youth Law Center demonstrates that racism exists at every step of the juvenile justice process. They found that while Black youth make up 15 percent of the population under 18, they account for 40 percent of youth sent to adult courts and 58 percent of youth sent to adult prison.

Among youth with no prior arrest record for murder, rape, and robbery, nine times as many Black youth are put behind bars than white youth. For drug offenses, which can carry a wide range of penalties, Black youth are 48 times more likely to face prison time. Hilary Shelton, Washington bureau director of the NAACP, stated, "Obviously racial profiling, targeting patrols in certain low-income neighborhoods, and racial bias within the justice system contributes significantly to the stark disparities confirmed in this report."

The case has sparked widespread discussion because of the growing number of cases in which the courts try youth as adults. On February 6 several hundred people filled the Koinonia Worship Center to "build unity" for Lionel Tate and to oppose the use of adult sentences against youth. Speakers included Lionel's mother Kathleen Grossett-Tate, who has spoken out for justice for her son, and Eric Jones of the South Broward Ministerial Alliance. Organizers announced there will be another rally on February 25 to demand Lionel Tate and other youth not be charged and sentenced as adults.

'Stop crimes against Cuba!'

Continued from Page 13

somber list. Instead of capping these crimes with the horrors of invasion and war, we should in simple justice offer the Cuban people all the help in our power.

Let's resume normal diplomatic and trade relations. Let's send delegations to study the successes of the Cubans and see what we can learn from them. Instead of a policy of hatred toward Cuba, let's initiate a policy of friendship.

We firmly believe in the right of every people to choose whatever kind of govern-

ment they want, free from any foreign pressure. We believe that the Cubans are entitled to exercise this basic democratic right. We call for solidarity with them in defending it.

We hope that every American who believes in the equality of nations will join in picketing and demonstrating for this right or will indicate to Congress and the White House by other means how he feels.

End the aggression against Cuba at once! End the economic blockade! End the policy of trying to isolate and crush the Cuban revolution! Hands off Cuba!

LETTERS

Irish freedom fight

One striking indication of the relative decline of British and Unionist political power in Northern Ireland and of the rising strength of the republican freedom fighters, is the sharp decline of the British military and police presence at protest actions. As recently as 1996, nationalist and republican mass actions were met by large British military mobilizations, which frequently ended in armed attacks on the demonstrators.

I returned to Derry for the Bloody Sunday commemoration in January 2000. On the Thursday before the march and rally, the RUC attempted to arrest several young activists who were building the march, leafleting and selling buttons on Ship Quay St., the main shopping area.

Within moments several hundred people rushed to the aid of the arrested youths and liberated them from the cops. A couple of hours of street clashes ensued until the police were pulled back to their barracks.

This year the Royal Ulster Constabulary was conspicuous by its absence. No tommy-gun-toting paramilitary cops hanging out in front of the shops; I noticed they were gone, but can't say I missed them. At the march and rally, security and traffic control were arranged by republican volunteers and community activists, and of course things went fine.

The absence of a cop presence may seem like a small thing, but it is a graphic measure of the political advances made by the Irish freedom fighters and the political space the British have been forced to cede.

*Roy Inglee
Newark, Delaware*

Energy crisis I

Doubled or tripled utility bills have started arriving in the mail—on top of already soaring rents and gasoline. This morning one of my younger co-workers at the steel mill here piped up in our breakroom discussion that the government should take over the running of the gas and electric utilities. "These are things

that are too valuable to be run for profit by a few rich people," he said. "And it really goes for all vital services like hospitals, which were supposed to provide health care but are only run to make profits." We all mulled this idea over together throughout the day.

It shows how timely the *Militant's* news coverage on the electricity "crisis" is and the demand that the power companies be nationalized under workers' control. I told my co-worker that the speaker at the Militant Labor Forum the evening before had the same proposal.

Later we came back to the conversation and started discussing other segments of production that should be nationalized, such as food production. The same co-worker said he thought the government should provide farmers with tractors and other expensive items so they don't have to go into debt just to grow food.

In times like these I think of Fidel Castro's comment at the turn of the millennium to the effect that great

crises also create great solutions from the working class.

*Ellen Haywood
Pittsburg, California*

Energy crisis II

As California state officials take measures to ensure that the burden of the state's energy crisis falls upon working people, they are also using the opportunity to bolster the powers of the police.

Under the banner of "energy conservation," Gov. Gray Davis's bailout of California utilities empowers state and local police forces to fine businesses up to \$1,000 per day for what a cop determines is "excessive outdoor lighting" of a shop, store, or workplace.

While up until now the loudest protests against Davis's scheme have come from automobile dealers, who claim that the hundreds of lights illuminating their cars day and night are necessary to protect their merchandise, it is only a matter of time before reports of cops' racist, arbitrary, and violent enforcement of the law come in. The

finances will also be a handy weapon available to landlords and real estate sharks against those current occupants of storefronts and other building spaces they deem an obstacle to lucrative "redevelopment" and "gentrification" plans.

Press and government mouthpieces for the capitalists are using the energy crisis to slander working people not only as wasteful, but as criminal as well. The California state assembly is now discussing legislation that would double penalties for crimes committed during blackouts, and inform police in advance of areas where power is to be cut off so that they can flood that area with cops.

*Jim Altenberg
Oakland, California*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

UK train drivers fight privatization

BY ROSE KNIGHT

LONDON—More than 2,000 train drivers shut down London's Underground for 24 hours February 4-5 to protest government plans to privatize part of the system, which the workers warned would threaten jobs and result in further deterioration of safety.

The strike was to be the first of three one-day actions called by the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) and the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT).

Workers who belong to the RMT were prevented from going on strike by a court injunction instigated by the London Underground Limited (LUL), a government-run company. However, these unionists refused to cross picket lines set up by the drivers and joined pickets outside the signing-on depots. The degree of support for strike action was shown when RMT members voted by a 9-1 margin to strike.

The Labour Party government of Anthony Blair has been pushing a Private Public Partnership scheme, known as PPP here, in

which responsibility for the infrastructure, including track, tunnels, stations, and rolling stock of the underground system is turned over to private capitalist enterprises on 30-year contracts. Privatization of Britain's rail system under the previous Conservative Party government—defended today by the Blair administration—has been a disaster for working people and faces growing opposition in the country after a string of train wrecks, which have killed and injured hundreds.

The unions are demanding the establishment of a joint working group to investigate safety standards and a prohibition on compulsory redundancies [layoffs]. At the Elephant and Castle station in South London, workers on the picket line hung a banner on the railings saying, "RMT & ASLEF, Striking for Safety." Only 8 percent of scheduled trains ran, with just 39 out of the usual 476 trains running during the morning rush hour.

At Seven Sisters station in North London, driver Trevor Penney said the importance of the strike was that it "highlighted the dangers of the Private Public Partnership scheme in relation to safety." Penney said that in his opinion the government would delay any decisions on the Underground until after the general election "because privatizing the tube [subway] isn't popular. The talks are just delaying tactics."

Dave O'Connell said he thought the strike was needed "to prevent the fragmentation of the Underground. If the private sector is in control, their duty to the shareholders will take preference over the interest of the workers." He thought the strike was solid and that "the court decision was a complete erosion of democracy. We had a vote of 9-1 in favor, and yet a completely unelected judge could ban the strike and also refuse an appeal."

He said he was not surprised by the role

of the Labour government in allowing the court case to go ahead. "I never expected anything else," he stated. Pickets at the Northumberland Park station in north London said they were on strike because they did not want the tube to go the way of the rest of the railways.

Mayor has own proposals

In addition to the unions, the government's plans for the Underground have been opposed by London mayor Kenneth Livingstone, who hired Bob Kiley, former chief of New York's subway and bus system, to be London's Transport Commissioner. Livingstone, who described Kiley as "the world's most successful transport operator," is proposing to raise money to modernize the system by issuing government bonds.

Kiley has been in talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport John Prescott since last November. Hoping to prevent a walkout, Prescott on the eve of the strike moved to place Kiley in overall charge of negotiations over the future of the tube.

Livingstone, a longtime Labour leader, defeated Frank Dobson, the Labour candidate backed by Blair, in the mayoral elections last May. He was expelled from the Labour Party for not ending his candidacy, but has since tried to mend relations with the government while maintaining support of the trade unions who backed his candidacy. This has meant compromising his views on how the London underground should be funded and stepping back from supporting the strike.

In a December 7 article in the *Independent*, Livingstone wrote that press reports saying he would join the picket lines "were entirely false" even while admitting that "London Underground's workers are clearly affected by all parts of the Private Public Partnership" proposal, and that the ballots they cast were "the largest majorities in favour of strike action in the Underground's history."

"Aside from the PPP," he wrote, "my working relations with the government have been excellent, with nothing more than the normal strains that are to be expected between any mayor elected by Londoners and the national government."

A recent survey by the Chamber of Commerce, showing that three-quarters of businesses in London opposed the government's privatization moves, has bolstered Livingstone's position in the dispute. In a regular TV program, "Ask Ken," Livingstone on February 6 said that he was not bothered by where private money would come from as long as the unified management of the underground remained intact and functioned efficiently.

ASLEF has now suspended future actions because the government agreed to set up a joint committee of the rail unions, LUL management, and Infracos—the consortium bidding for the LUL contracts. No agreement was reached on a unified workforce, redundancies, or adequate staffing levels, but the RMT forced LUL to withdraw all threats made against the unionists who supported the strike. The bosses had said they would place custodial sentences on union shop stewards and sue the union for damages. As a result of the court injunction, the RMT will be holding another vote to take joint strike action with ASLEF in March if the outstanding issues are not resolved.

Rail crisis

The solidity of the walkout, and the confidence of RMT workers who ignored the court ruling banning their strike, comes in part out of the rail crisis triggered by the October 22 crash at Hatfield on the East Coast main line. There, a train carrying 156 passengers derailed, killing four and injuring 35.

Eleven months before the wreck inspectors from the maintenance firm Balfour

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Immigrants defend rights in Spain



Immigrant rights supporters at protest in Murcia, Spain. Since January 23, when new anti-immigrant legislation went into effect in Spain, immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been organizing protest actions in Barcelona, Ceuta, Madrid, Murcia, and Andalucía.

Aristide sworn in as president of Haiti

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Jean-Bertrand Aristide assumed office as Haiti's 47th president at an inauguration ceremony attended by about 10,000 people February 7 in Port-au-Prince. Aristide, leader of Fanmi Lavalas, ran virtually unopposed in the November 26 election. He takes office in a country brutally exploited by imperialism, home of the poorest working people in the Western hemisphere.

Fanmi Lavalas, a bourgeois party, is popular among Haitian working people because of its origins in the successful revolution against the dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Aristide helped lead the struggle and founded the Lavalas movement. In February 1991 he became the first elected president after the fall of Duvalier, coming to power at the head of enormous popular mobilizations.

The U.S. government, which had always been a close ally of Duvalier, was worried that the new president would not contain the volatile situation. On Sept. 30, 1991, Aristide was overthrown by a group of high ranking officers, many of whom were on the CIA payroll.

In 1994 the U.S. government invaded Haiti, ousting the military government and reinstalling Aristide as president. By accepting U.S. sponsorship, Aristide severely weakened the struggle of the workers and farmers, and legitimized a humiliating occupation of the country by an imperialist army.

Leaders of the right-wing opposition to Aristide, who are afraid of the expectations aroused among working people by Aristide's populism, have used the last few years to try to undermine his support.

Washington expressed its dissatisfaction with Aristide's recent reelection by sending only its resident ambassador, rather than a high-level representative, to the inauguration. Paris, with investments in and close economic ties to Haiti, took a similar ap-

proach. The U.S. State Department issued a "travel warning" February 5, claiming that "the Presidential inauguration of Jean-Bertrand Aristide slated for Feb. 7, 2001 has the potential to spark violent demonstrations and individual acts of violence."

The only head of state scheduled to be present at the ceremony, Hypolito Mejia, president of the neighboring Dominican Republic, pulled out at the last minute, citing concerns over his safety.

The international press coverage played up a counter event organized by a coalition of 15 parties opposed to Fanmi Lavalas called the Democratic Convergence. They refused to recognize the legitimacy of the elections of November 26, calling them fraudulent. Their counterinaugural installed Gérard Gourgue as president of a "provisional government." Gourgue was minister of justice under the Duvalierist regime of Gen. Henri Namphy, who was appointed to head the government after Duvalier fled the country in February 1986.

In a speech before 200 people, Gourgue called for the reestablishment of the old army that was broken up after the U.S. occupation, and the return of the exiles.

Leaders of the opposition parties called for an uprising against the inauguration of Aristide. These parties grew out of the ruling classes of Haiti with strong ties to the old regime and the military.

According to a front page article in the February 2 *Washington Post*, the Democratic Convergence was formed "with help from the International Republican Institute," an organization "closely identified with the U.S. Republican Party." The article quotes members of the convergence calling for a new U.S. military occupation of Haiti as "the cleanest solution."

In his inaugural address, Aristide pointed to a "partnership" between private companies and the state as the way to reduce the

level of unemployment from 60 to 45 percent. He also pledged to create 500,000 new jobs. He set a goal of increasing the access of rural communities to potable water from 16 to 70 percent, and in the cities from 44 to 80 percent. He put forward the goal of increasing access to medical services from 45 to 80 percent of the population and the literacy rate from 45 to 80 percent.

Aristide singled out the Cuban contingent of doctors, greeting them in Spanish.

One reflection of the high expectations Haitian working people have of the new Aristide presidency is the determination expressed by a 28-year-old construction worker who told the Associated Press on inauguration day, "We planted the seed, and now it's time to reap what's sown. We want to make sure all the work we've done for Aristide pays off."

One 30-year-old Haitian worker in South Florida, who asked that his name not be published, said, "Aristide is a good guy. I support him but I won't celebrate until things are fixed."

Briefly speaking in English, Aristide referred to the eight-point program he agreed to in a December meeting with Anthony Lake, outgoing president Clinton's special envoy to Haiti.

He pledged to abide by these commitments, which include seeking out a "new dialogue with international financial institutions" to secure private investment and promote a free market.

A street festival celebrated Aristide's inauguration outside the headquarters of Ve Ye Yo in Miami. The gathering was upbeat and confident, despite the slap in the face dealt to the new government and to Haitian sovereignty by Washington's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the Aristide government. Participants watched videotapes showing the agrarian reform program of Lavalas.